ROMANTIC SECRETS

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WHAT PRICE STARDOM

THE KINDRED HEART

Romantic story

The picture

how-many magazines!

Exec. Editor, WILL LIEBE

NARFSTAR NARFSTAR NARFSTAR NARFSTAR

EDITH---TRY TO UNDERSTAND! TRY TO GET HOLD OF YOURSELF! IT MEANS EVERYTHING---OUR LOVE, OUR LIFE TOGETHER!
MAKING THEM KEEP ME HERE AND TORTURE ME....SOB!
THROUGH EDITH'S SICK, BE-WEBBED BRAIN, THE WORLD WAS VIEWED AS A PRISM OF BEWILDERING, TORMENTING DISTORTIONS. HER LOVELINESS AND YOUTH HAD BECOME A WITHERED, NERVE-CONTORTED MASK! AND THE LOVE SHE HAD BORNE PHIL ---WAS NOW A FRIGHTENING, SOUL-DESTROYING MALEVOLENCE!
PHIL SMILED AT ME AFFECTIONATELY AS HE BROUGHT THE GROCERY TRUCK TO A HALT BEFORE THE DANCE HALL. HE HELPED ME DOWN, AND FOR A BRIEF MOMENT, HELD ME IN HIS ARMS, HIS LIPS BRUSHING AGAINST MY FACE!
I'D BE PERFECTLY CONTENTED TO SKIP THE DANCE AND HOLD YOU HERE, LIKE THIS, FOR THE REMAINDER OF THE EVENING!
DEAR, GENTLE, LOVABLE PHIL! HE CARED FOR ME EVEN WHEN I WAS SPINDLY AND THIN, WITH THAT AWFUL BRACE ON MY TEETH!
YES, HE'D NODDED AWAY MY SELF-CONSCIOUSNESS, TOOK ME DATING---EVEN TAUGHT ME HOW TO DANCE! THE THOUGHT WAS AN INSTANTLY PASSING ONE, AS---
OH--SOME OF THE OTHERS OF OUR CROWD ARE ARRIVING! LET'S GO INSIDE, PHIL!
OKAY--BUT I CONSIDER THIS A TEMPORARY RETREAT, HUH, I CAN TAKE UP A MORE STRATEGIC POSITION LATER!

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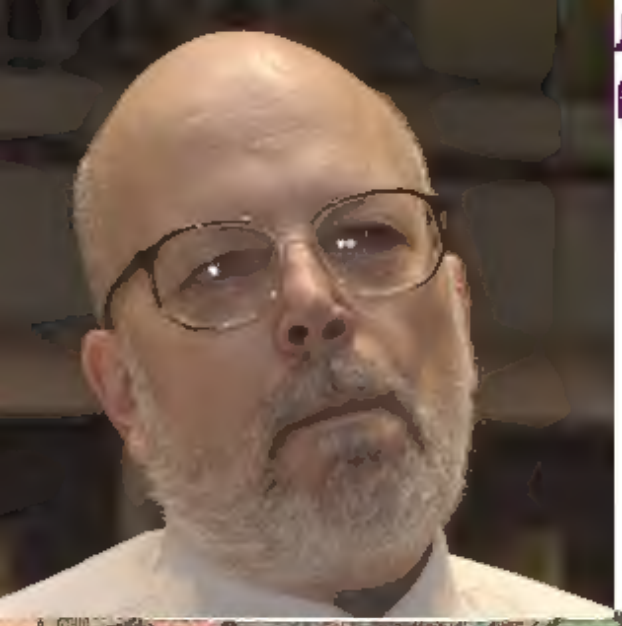


NARFSTAR IS WATCHING YOU

IT WAS A ROUTINELY ENTERTAINING AFFAIR, UNTIL SEVERAL NEW FACES WE HADN'T SEEN BEFORE ENTERED THE DANCE HALL. THE YOUNG MEN, THREE OF THEM, WERE EXPENSIVELY GROOMED, THOUGH A BIT TOO FASTIDIOUSLY. THEY MOVED ONTO THE DANCE FLOOR, CUTTING IN WITH A RATHER AGGRESSIVE MANNER!

PHIL--- DO YOU KNOW THOSE FELLOWS?

NO, I DON'T! AND I DISLIKE THEM ALREADY---BECAUSE THEY'VE INTERRUPTED YOUR CONCENTRATING ON ME!

WELL---JUST LOOK AT HIM! HE'S FASCINATINGLY HANDSOME! I'LL HAVE TO GET TO HIM BEFORE EVERY GIRL IN THE PLACE MAKES A PLAY FOR HIM!

MIND IF I CUT IN FOR THIS NUMBER, BUD?

I---I GUESS IT'S OKAY!

SUDDENLY, THE STRANGER WAS HOLDING ME CLOSE IN HIS ARMS AND GUIDING ME ACROSS THE FLOOR---AND I FELT MYSELF MOVING AND GLIDING AS I NEVER HAD BEFORE. HE SMILED, APPRAISING ME RATHER SUGGESTIVELY, AND INWARDLY I TREMBLED!

Y-YOU DANCE BEAUTIFULLY! ARE YOU A PROFESSIONAL?

NEVERMIND ME, BABY! YOU'RE TERRIFIC----- AND I OUGHT TO KNOW!

HERE, BUD---HIT IT NOW! SOMETHING FAST WITH A LOT OF KICK!

WHEN THE MUSIC STRUCK A FAST TEMPO WE WERE SWIRLING ABOUT THE FLOOR ALONE, ALL EYES UPON US! IT WAS A HEAVENLY SENSATION I'D NEVER EXPERIENCED BEFORE!
WHAT'S A KID WITH YOUR STYLE DOING IN A NEIGHBORHOOD JOINT LIKE THIS? JUST VISITING?
NO, I-I LIVE NEARBY! WE ALWAYS DANCE HERE!
I'D SURE LOVE TO SEE YOU COME ALIVE TO SOME REAL RHYTHM! I KNOW A SPOT WHERE THERE'S A TERRIFIC COMBO! THEIR MUSIC PUTS FIRE IN YOUR VEINS! HOW ABOUT IT?
I-I REALLY CAN'T GO. YOU SEE, I CAME WITH PHIL AND SOME FRIENDS
W-WHERE ARE YOU TAKING ME?
INTRODUCE ME TO THIS PHIL CHARACTER ---AND LET ME TRY MY POWERS OF PERSUASION! I DON'T WANT TO LOSE YOU, BABY!
RITCHIE FALKEN, THE STRANGER, INTRODUCED HIMSELF TO PHIL AND INVITED THE OTHER KIDS TO COME ALONG AS WELL. PHIL WAS A LITTLE RELUCTANT, BUT I WAS EXCITED, ANXIOUS. THE OTHER GIRLS WERE LOOKING UP TO ME FOR THE LEAD FOR THE FIRST TIME, SO ---
OH, COME ON, PHIL---IT'LL BE FUN FOR A CHANGE! LET'S GO!
OKAY---IF YOU REALLY WANT TO,
I'LL BE GLAD TO GO, PROVIDED YOU PROMISE THE FIRST DANCE TO ME!
SORRY--HONEY, BUT I'M ALREADY BOOKED FOR THAT ONE!
I'D NEVER BEEN IN A PLACE LIKE HOLLY'S GROVE BEFORE. IT WAS ONE OF THOSE DIMLY LIT BASEMENT PLACES WITH LOTS OF SMOKE -- HAZY INDEFINABLE FACES ---AND MUSIC THAT THROBBED WITH A JUNGLE BEAT!
I-I CAN BARELY SEE ANYTHING!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO, AND YOU WON'T WANT TO! JUST CLOSE YOUR EYES AND LET THE MUSIC SHOW YOU THE WAY!

COME ON, ANGEL, LET'S DIG A LITTLE OF THAT HEAVENLY MUSIC! LOOK AROUND, KIDS--- AND FIND US SOME TABLES!
I-I'LL SEE YOU IN A MINUTE, PHIL!

I FELT WILDLY ELATED AS I NEVER HAD BEFORE AS WE WEAVED RESTLESSLY, CONSTANTLY, FEVERISHLY ACROSS THE SMALL FLOOR TO THE CRESCENDO OF DISSONANCE AND RAUCOUS SOUND!
I'VE NEVER KNOWN DANCING TO BE LIKE THIS!
THAT'S BECAUSE YOU'VE NEVER LET LOOSE BEFORE!

BUT THIS IS YOUR NIGHT, BABY! YOU'RE IN COMPANY THAT'S MORE YOUR STYLE! YOU JUST NEED SOMEONE TO APPRECIATE YOU!
WE'VE ALREADY DANCED THREE NUMBERS, I THINK WE'D BETTER GET BACK TO THE OTHERS.

BUT I REALLY DIDN'T WANT TO LEAVE RITCHIE'S ARMS---AND HE SENSED THAT! SEVERAL TIMES PHIL TRIED TO TAKE ME AWAY, BUT RITCHIE ALWAYS AVOIDED HIM ON THE CROWDED FLOOR! AND DURING ONE NUMBER, WHEN THE MUSIC WAS MUTED, AND I SEEMED TO MOAN AS PITEOUSLY AS A SOUL IN TORMENT----

LOOK, EDITH---IT'S 2:00 A.M. AND YOU'VE GOT TO BREAK THIS UP! YOUR FOLKS'LL BE WORRIED TO DEATH!
NOW RELAX, BUSTER --SHE'S NO KID! YOU CAN'T GO AROUND TELLING HER WHAT TO DO!

I WAS SO MORTIFIED BY PHIL'S ANGERED INTERVENTION, SO HUMILIATED BY THE INFERENCE THAT I WAS A CHILD IN NEED OF GUIDANCE---THAT I DID NOT GO TO PHIL'S AID EVEN AS RITCHIE STRUCK HIM!

I COULD BREAK YOU IN TWO, WISE GUY! BUT I WON'T FILTHY MY HANDS ON YOU! LET'S CLEAR OUT OF HERE, EDITH!

I--I'M NOT GOING WITH YOU!

SO THAT'S THE WAY IT IS! THIS IS A FOOLISH MOVE ON YOUR PART, EDITH! I'M LEAVING NOW--- AND IF YOU'VE ANY SENSE AT ALL, YOU'LL COME WITH ME!

YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, JUNIOR!

PHIL STRODE AWAY AND THE OTHERS IN OUR GROUP FOLLOWED--BUT I REMAINED BEHIND, ADAMANTLY, REBELLIOUSLY! I FELT THAT THE GIRLS ENVIED ME, HAD HIGHER REGARD FOR ME NOW THAT I'D ASSERTED MYSELF!

NOW THAT WE'RE RID OF THOSE CRUMBS WE CAN REALLY HAVE SOME FUN!

I--IT'S LATE, RITCHIE--MAYBE I SHOULDN'T HAVE STAYED!

THAT'S HOW I STARTED GOING PLACES WITH RITCHIE! I MOVED FAST, WITH A REAL FAST CROWD. SEVERAL OF THE GIRLS FROM MY OWN GROUP CAME ALONG WITH ME ON SUBSEQUENT EVENINGS, ENCOURAGED BY MY DARING!

I SURE WISH I DIDN'T HAVE TO DROP THE OTHER GALS OFF! I'D LIKE TO SAY GOOD NIGHT WITHOUT BEING RUSHED!

THERE'LL BE OTHER GOOD NIGHTS, RITCHIE.

SO LONG, KIDS---SEE YOU TOMORROW!

'NIGHT, EDITH---IT SURE WAS SWELL OF YOU TO TAKE US ALONG, AND WE USED TO THINK IT WAS MADGE WHO COULD STIR UP EXCITEMENT!

--PHIL!

I'VE GOT TO TALK TO YOU, EDITH! THIS KIND OF THING IS ALL WRONG! WE USED TO UNDERSTAND EACH OTHER PRETTY WELL. WHAT'S HAPPENED?

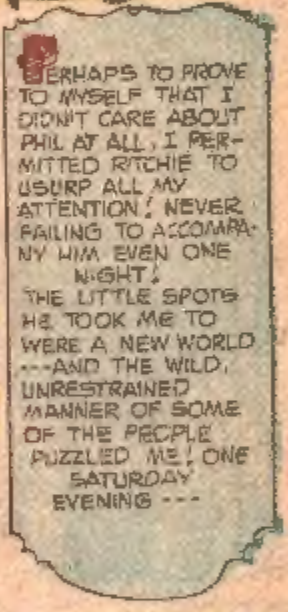
THE ONLY THING THAT'S CHANGED IS THAT I'VE GROWN UP! I DON'T NEED YOUR ADVICE ANYMORE---OR YOUR OPINIONS!
JUST LIKE THAT! AND WHAT ABOUT US---THE WAY WE FELT ABOUT EACH OTHER? THE PLANS WE MADE?

I--I'M NOT IN THE MOOD TO DISCUSS THAT NOW, IF YOU DON'T MIND!
BUT I DO MIND! THERE'S NO POINT IN PROLONGING THIS THING! WE'VE GOT TO KNOW WHERE WE STAND!

LET ME GO!
EDITH, YOU'VE GOT TO WAKE UP! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT HANGING AROUND WITH CHARACTERS LIKE RITCHIE, YOU'LL END UP IN TROUBLE UP TO YOUR EARS?

THIS IS REALLY ALL VERY POINTLESS! I INTEND TO DO EXACTLY AS I PLEASE!
OKAY---THEN THAT'S THE LAST WORD! BUT WE'RE THROUGH AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!--WASHED UP!

I--LET HIM GO! I DON'T CARE, REALLY. I--I GUESS I'VE JUST GROWN USED TO HIM, THAT'S ALL!

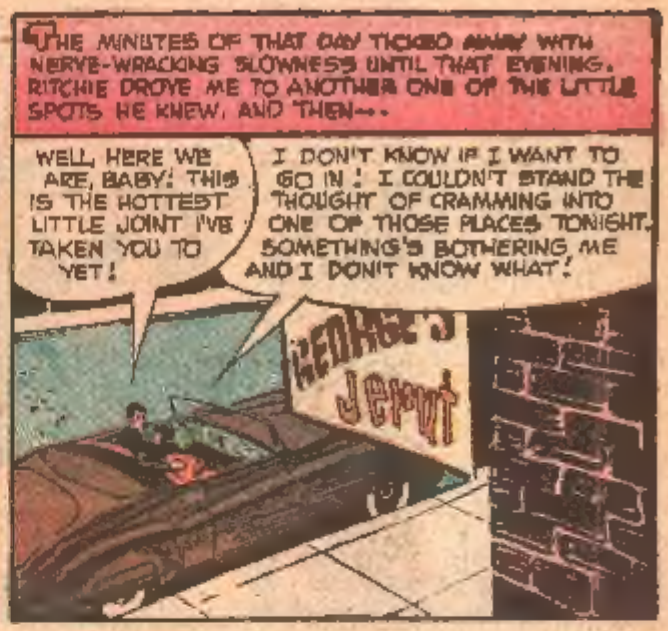

PERHAPS TO PROVE TO MYSELF THAT I DIDN'T CARE ABOUT PHIL AT ALL, I PERMITTED RITCHIE TO USURP ALL MY ATTENTION! NEVER FAILING TO ACCOMPANY HIM EVEN ONE NIGHT!
THE LITTLE SPOTS HE TOOK ME TO WERE A NEW WORLD ---AND THE WILD, UNRESTRAINED MANNER OF SOME OF THE PEOPLE PUZZLED ME! ONE SATURDAY EVENING ---

WHAT MAKES THEM LIKE THAT? I HAVE THE FEELING THAT HALF OF THEM DON'T KNOW WHAT THEY'RE DOING! AND THEY'RE NOT DRUNK!
I WAS WAITING FOR YOU TO ASK ME, EDITH!

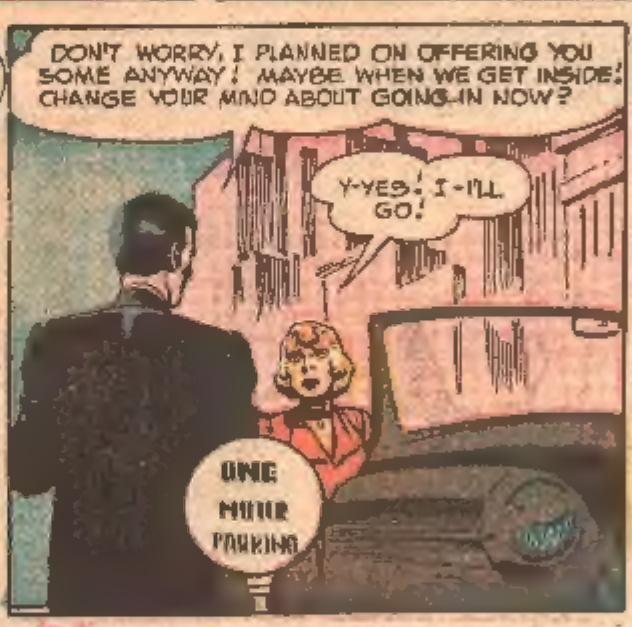
YOU SEE, THEY GET THEIR KICKS FROM DRUGS---! YOU KNOW, NARCOTICS!
DRUGS!

DRUGS! IT WAS A WORD TO MAKE THE BLOOD RUN COLD! A WORD CUSTOMARILY SPOKEN OF IN A DREAD AURA OF FEAR. BUT RITCHIE MENTIONED IT WITH A CASUAL, COOL DETACHMENT, EVEN AS THE GIRLS TREMBLED VISIBLY!
DON'T BELIEVE ALL THE SENSATIONAL NEWS STORIES YOU HEAR ABOUT! THE STUFF RELAXES YOU, LETS YOU FORGET YOUR WORRIES AND GET A THRILL OUT OF LIVING!
WANT TO TRY SOME, EDITH? HERE—GO AHEAD! YOU CAN TAKE IT THIS WAY! JUST SWALLOW IT!
THE GIRLS ARE ALL WATCHING ME! I'LL TAKE ONE JUST TO SHOCK THEM! ONE WON'T DO ME ANY HARM!
I STILLED THE SHAKING OF MY HAND AS I BROUGHT THE PELLET TO MY LIPS. I HELD IT INDECISIVELY BETWEEN MY TEETH FOR AN INSTANT, AND THEN---
THERE---I'VE SWALLOWED IT!
WHAT'D I TELL YOU? NOTHING TO IT AT ALL!
I-I THINK WE'D BETTER BE LEAVING!
I GUESS WE SCARED THEM A LITTLE! I FIGURED THEY WEREN'T YOUR SPEED ANYWAY, BABY!
SUDDENLY... I COULDN'T JUDGE HOW LONG AFTER THEY LEFT--I FELT THE FLOOR YIELDING BENEATH MY FEET! ALL SHAPES AND FACES BECAME SOFT, LIQUID-LIKE! RITCHIE'S VOICE CAME TO ME AS IN A WHISPER, MILES OUT OF REACH!
COME ON, BABY----LET'S DANCE!
I-I DON'T KNOW IF I CAN... I-I FEEL AS THOUGH MY LEGS ARE MOVING WITH A WILL OF THEIR OWN!

ALL SENSE OF CONSCIOUS RECOGNITION BOGED AWAY. TIME AND PLACE WERE FORGOTTEN! LATER, I REMEMBER VERY VAGUELY ARRIVING HOME. AND IN THE MORNING, I FELT RESTLESS, NERVOUS, TREMBLING!
I-I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S THE MATTER WITH ME! I FEEL SO TENSE I COULD SCREAM!


THE MINUTES OF THAT DAY TICKED AWAY WITH NERVE-WRACKING SLOWNESS UNTIL THAT EVENING. RITCHIE DROVE ME TO ANOTHER ONE OF THE LITTLE SPOTS HE KNEW, AND THEN---
WELL, HERE WE ARE, BABY! THIS IS THE HOTTEST LITTLE JOINT I'VE TAKEN YOU TO YET!
I DON'T KNOW IF I WANT TO GO IN! I COULDN'T STAND THE THOUGHT OF CRAMMING INTO ONE OF THOSE PLACES TONIGHT. SOMETHING'S BOTHERING ME AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT!
KENNEDY'S
Jerut

SURE YOU DO, BUT YOU DON'T WANT TO ADMIT IT! YOU WANT SOME MORE OF THAT STUFF I GAVE YOU LAST NIGHT!
H-HE'S RIGHT! I DO! I FEEL THAT ONLY THAT SENSATION WOULD CALM ME NOW!


DON'T WORRY, I PLANNED ON OFFERING YOU SOME ANYWAY! MAYBE WHEN WE GET INSIDE! CHANGE YOUR MIND ABOUT GOING IN NOW?
Y-YES! I-I'LL GO!
ONE HOUR PARKING

AFTER THAT, RITCHIE LED ME ON TO MORE AND MORE OF THE SAME---UNTIL AT LAST, ALL DESIRE TO THINK, TO MOVE, TO EXIST, WAS GONE! I FORGOT ABOUT MY CLOTHING, MY APPEARANCE--OR HAVING FUN!

I WANTED ONLY TO APPEASE MY TORTUROUS CRAVING! AND THEN, ONE DAY, RITCHIE STOPPED CALLING ON ME. I SOUGHT HIM OUT, AND---

YOU MAY AS WELL FACE IT, BABY---YOU AND ME ARE THROUGH! IF YOU WANT ANY MORE OF THAT STUFF ---YOU'LL BUY IT! I'LL LINE YOU UP WITH A CONTACT!
NO! I'LL NEVER BUY IT! I COULDN'T AFFORD IT!

THAT'S THE WAY THINGS STAND! YOU'LL FIND A WAY—THEY ALL DO!
Y-YOU DID THIS ALL INTENTIONALLY TO MAKE ME ADDICTED TO THE DRUGS! SO THAT'S WHERE YOU GET ALL THE MONEY YOU SPEND! YOU--YOU--OH!..SOB...!

BUT BY NOW I HAD TO HAVE THE DRUGS! IT COST SO MUCH I HAD TO PLAY TRUANT FROM SCHOOL AND WORK PART-TIME! STILL I COULDN'T EARN ENOUGH! IN A WILD REASONLESS DESPERATION I WENT TO PHIL--- TO THE SMALL GROCERY STORE HE OPERATED. I FEIGNED A HUMBLENESS, A CONTRITION I DID NOT FEEL.

I-I'M SORRY FOR EVERYTHING, PHIL! I THOUGHT MAYBE I MIGHT SETTLE DOWN NOW HELP YOU AROUND THE STORE.

ALL RIGHT EDITH --WE'LL GIVE IT A TRY....

THERE'S THE CASH REGISTER I'LL BE GIVING CHANGE FROM!

I LOST ALL SENSE OF PROPORTION LEFT ME! I COULDN'T DISTINGUISH RIGHT FROM WRONG. I TOOK MONEY FROM THE REGISTER ALMOST EVERYDAY IN THE WEEKS TO COME. AND ONE DAY WHEN I THOUGHT I WAS ALONE AND UNNOTICED -

OH PHIL! THEN YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S BEEN REMOVING MONEY! I-I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!

EDITH - WHAT'S HAPPENED TO YOU? WHAT HAS MADE YOU LIKE THIS? - TELL ME.

PLEASE--PHIL, LET ME HAVE THE MONEY, PLEASE! I-I NEED IT TO BUY DRUGS! I MUST HAVE IT!

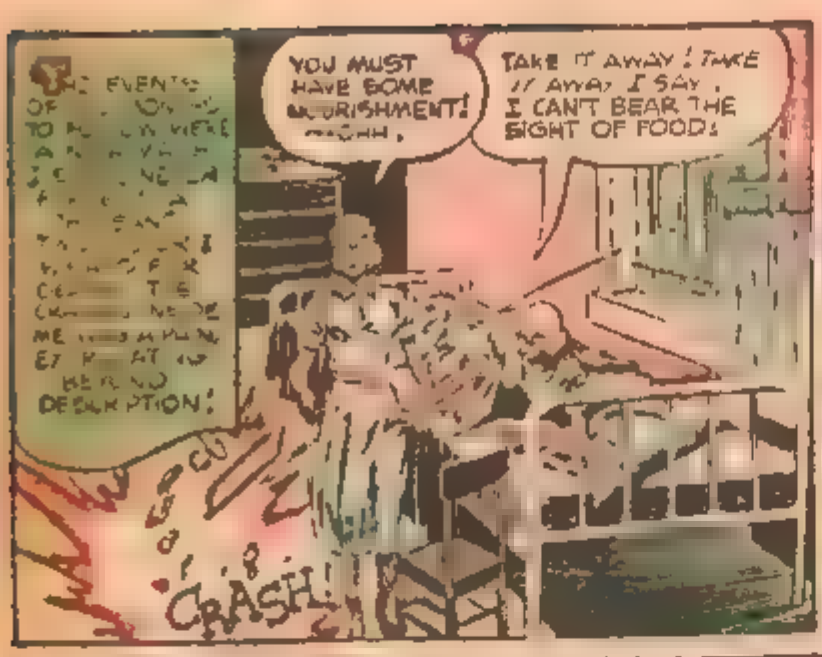
PHIL'S FACE [illegible] BLOOD. AND HE STARED AT ME IN [illegible] INCREDULITY FOR A LONG, INTERMINABLE MOMENT.

WHEN HE SPOKE, HIS VOICE WAS EDGED WITH PAIN

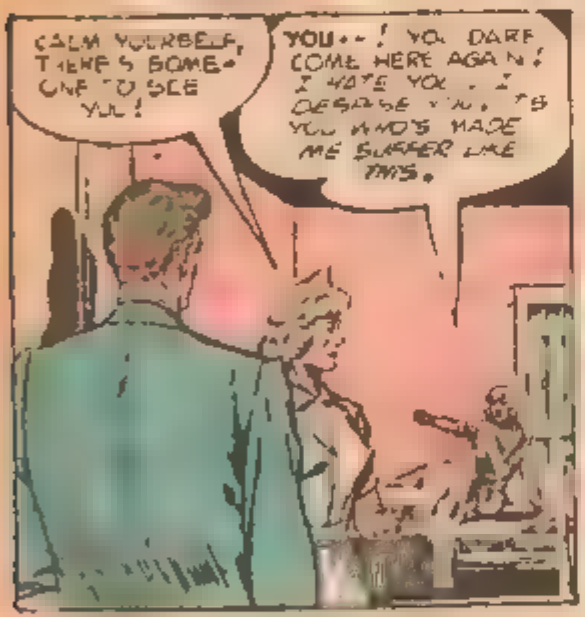
YOU FOOL! YOU LITTLE FOOL---YOU LET THEM DO THIS TO YOU! NOW YOU'RE SICK---TERRIBLY, SERIOUSLY SICK!

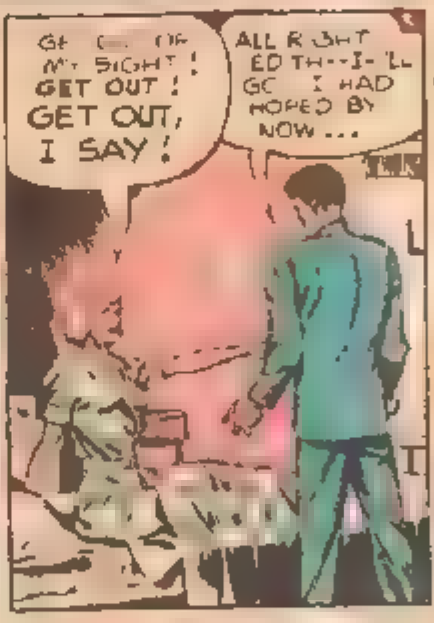
YOU'RE COMING WITH ME TO THE DARTCLIFFE HOSPITAL WHERE THEY CAN TREAT YOU!

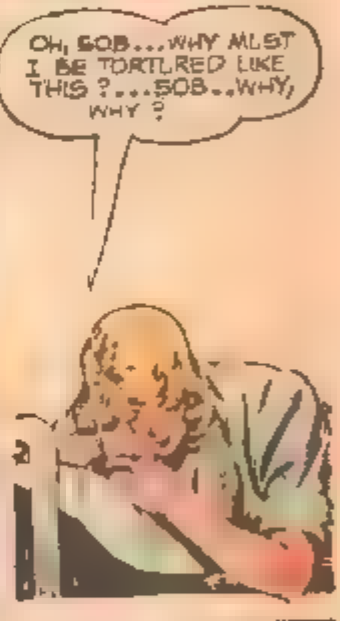
NO! I WON'T GO! LET ME ALONE--! LET ME ALONE!

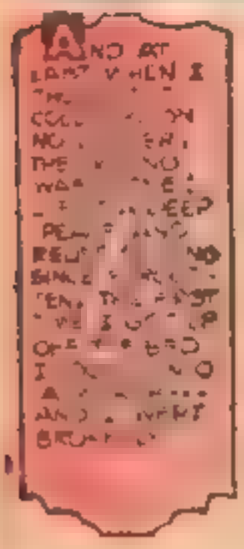

THE EVENTS OF [illegible] TO HIM WERE AS [illegible] AND HE WAS [illegible] BEYOND DESCRIPTION!
YOU MUST HAVE SOME NOURISHMENT! MMMHH,
TAKE IT AWAY! TAKE IT AWAY, I SAY. I CAN'T BEAR THE SIGHT OF FOOD!
CRASH!

PLEASE...PLEASE GIVE ME WHAT I NEED WHAT I MUST HAVE I-I'LL PROMISE YOU ANYTHING

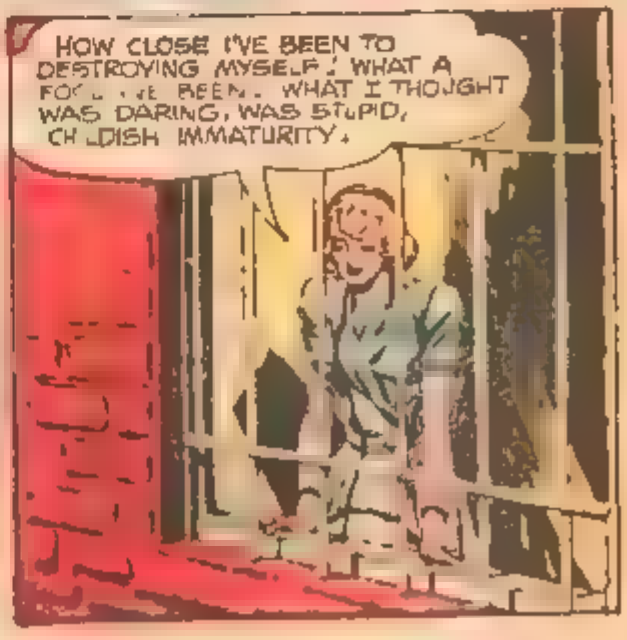

CALM YOURSELF, THERE'S SOMEONE TO SEE YOU!
YOU..! YOU DARE COME HERE AGAIN! I HATE YOU. I DESPISE YOU. IT'S YOU WHO'S MADE ME SUFFER LIKE THIS.


GET OUT OF MY SIGHT! GET OUT! GET OUT, I SAY!
ALL RIGHT ED TH--I-I'LL GO I HAD HOPED BY NOW...


OH, GOD...WHY MUST I BE TORTURED LIKE THIS?...GOD..WHY, WHY?


AND AT LAST WHEN I [illegible]

I-I'VE LOST SO MUCH WEIGHT...SOB...I LOOK TEN YEARS YOUNGER.


HOW CLOSE I'VE BEEN TO DESTROYING MYSELF! WHAT A FOOL I'VE BEEN. WHAT I THOUGHT WAS DARING, WAS STUPID, CHILDISH IMMATURITY.

UNDER THE TENDER MINISTRATIONS OF MY
STRIVING FOR WAS AT HAND I WAS RETURNING
LEFT SCHOOL AND ALL MY FRIENDS!
THERE'S THE GANG! I-I WONDER IF THEY'LL SPEAK TO ME. I-I GUESS I
EDITH!
I-I WAS AFRAID YOU'D HATE ME AND NOT ACCEPT ME
GRATEFUL TO YOU ALL
AND WE'RE GRATEFUL TO YOU EDITH. WE LEARNED
IT'S PHIL'S GROCERY TRUCK! WHO'S HOME? SOMEONE ELSE HOME FROM SCHOOL?
EDITH ALL I HAVE TO SAY IS I'M GLAD TO HAVE YOU BACK HERE IN MY ARMS WHERE YOU
LORD I WAS BROUGHT BACK TO MY SENSES

WHAT PRICE STARDOM

WELL--YOU'RE A STAR NOW, JEAN! THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED. EVEN REJECTED OUR LOVE FOR IT! I HOPE YOU'LL BE HAPPY! --GOODBYE!

HOW CAN I TELL HIM NOW THAT I'D GLADLY GIVE UP ALL THIS IF HE'D ONLY TAKE ME IN HIS ARMS AGAIN?

So Jean - all the world was a stage! But she imagined herself the star performer! All others were merely an audience to recognize and applaud her talents! Even the sound of Danny's voice declaring his love was lost in a thunderous ovation!

DANCING WAS ALWAYS IN MY BLOOD, AND MAYBE ONE OF THE REASONS I FELL IN LOVE WITH MY DANCE PARTNER, DANNY, WAS BECAUSE HE LOVED IT, TOO! WE WERE ONLY SMALL TIME -- BUT ON THE WAY UP, THANKS TO DANNY'S TALENT FOR DANCE ARRANGEMENTS!

WONDERFUL, DARLING! YOU'RE DANCING LIKE A DREAM!

I COULD GO ON LIKE THIS FOREVER! JUST DANCING AND DANCING--!

WE HAD NO SOONER FINISHED TAKING OUR LAST BOW WHEN DANNY WAS APPROACHED BY ONE OF THE TOP NAMES IN THE DANCE WORLD -- JAKOVA HIMSELF!

I LIKE YOUR ROUTINES, YOUNG MAN! COME WITH ME AND I'LL HELP YOU DEVELOP THAT ABILITY OF YOURS!

SORRY, MR JAKOVA-- BUT JEAN AND I ARE TOGETHER! IT MEANS A LOT TO ME TO KEEP IT SO!

NO SMOKING

DON'T LOOK SO SAD--PRETTY FACE! WHAT YOU AND I HAVE IS A LOT BETTER THAN FABULOUS SUCCESS!
IT WOULD BE WONDERFUL IF WE REALLY BE BIG-TIME!
ARE YOU INSINUATING THAT I'M SECOND-RATE?
OH, DANNY - YOU'RE ALWAYS KIDDING ME! BUT I DO LOVE YOU SO! HOLD ME TIGHT!
I WOULDN'T TRADE THAT FOR STAR BILLING ANYDAY!
OUR KISS WAS A HAVEN OF RAPTURE! MY LIPS TREMBLED ON HIS!
HOW ABOUT SOME COFFEE AND DOUGHNUTS AT POP'S PLACE? WE HAVE TIME BEFORE WE GO ON AGAIN!
EXIT
POP'S PLACE WAS ONLY AN ORDINARY, RUN OF THE-MILL DINER, BUT AT THAT MOMENT, NO PLACE ON EARTH COULD COMPARE WITH IT! DANNY'S EYES WERE SHININGLY ALIGHT WITH LOVE THAT TRANSPORTED US TO THE SECRET SANCTUARY OF OUR ENTRANGED HEARTS!
MMMM DELISH! WHY IS IT WITH YOU, EVERY MORSEL OF FOOD TASTES LIKE FILET MIGNON?
IT IS FUNNY-- I CAN EAT THIS A DOZEN TIMES A DAY WITH YOU--AND STILL ENJOY IT!
DINE
BUT SOME DAY WE'LL REALLY BE EATING FILET MIGNON!
WHO WANTS TO! DON'T WANT ANY DOUGHNUTS, COFFEE AND YOU!

IN THE MONTHS THAT PASSED, UNDER DANNY'S TUTELAGE, MY ACTING BEGAN TO SPARKLE! SOON, WE FOUND OURSELVES BOOKED INTO BETTER JOBS NOW THE SUSTAINED APPLAUSE WAS FOR ME -- AN INDICATION OF HOW FAR I HAD COME!

COME ON, DANNY! THEY WANT US TO TAKE ANOTHER BOW

IT'S YOU THEY WANT, HONEY! GO OUT THERE AND SHOW THEM THAT PRETTY SMILE!

IT IS ME THEY'RE APPLAUDING FOR! I'M GETTING THERE --!

THEN, ONE NIGHT, AFTER WE HAD FINISHED OUR ACT TO A THUNDEROUS OVATION...

HEY, PRETTY FACE - GUESS WHO'S OUTSIDE ASKING TO SEE YOU? TED SHAW!

THE MUSICAL COMEDY STAR?

MISS GORD -- MY COMPANY IS GOING ON TOUR - AND WE EXPECT TO OPEN IN A MUSICAL COMEDY AFTER THAT! I'D LIKE YOU TO JOIN US!

OH, MR SHAW - THANK YOU!

MISS GORD

YOUR PARTNER IS ALL RIGHT - BUT I CAN'T USE HIM IN THE ACT! IT'S YOU I WANT

I - I SEE

DANCING WITH TED SHAW WOULD MEAN A LONG STEP UP THE LADDER. I WANTED TO ACCEPT - WANTED TO VERY MUCH! BUT HOW WOULD I BE ABLE TO SELL THE IDEA TO DANNY?

WILL YOU GIVE ME A LITTLE TIME? I'D LIKE TO TALK TO MY PARTNER

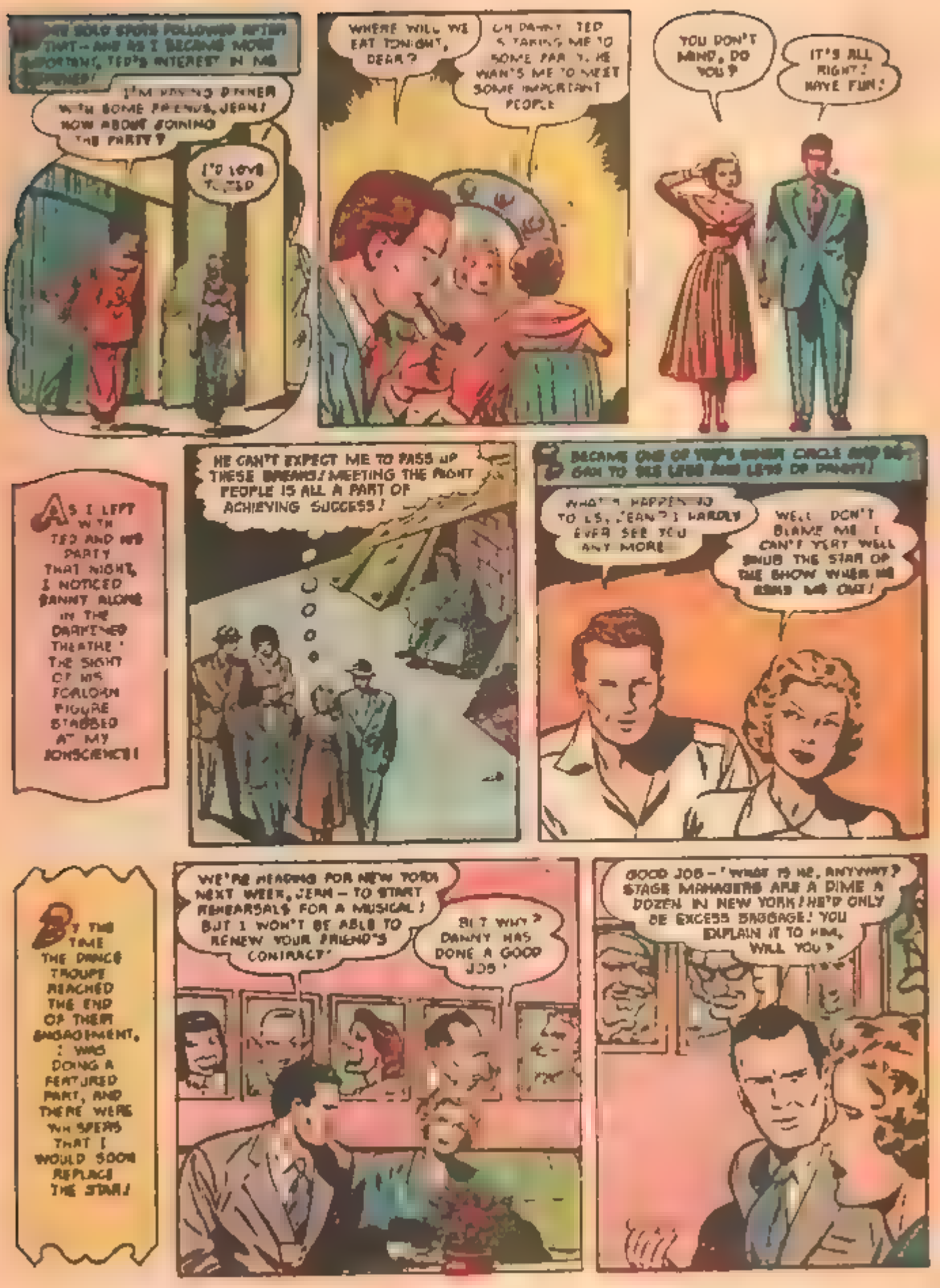
I SEE YOU WANT TO CONSIDER THE THOUGHT AWHILE! ALL RIGHT -- BUT I'M LEAVING TOWN TOMORROW, AND I'LL HAVE TO KNOW BY THEN!

BUT WHEN I BROACHED TED SHAW'S OFFER TO DANNY, THE HURT EXPRESSION IN HIS EYES TOLD ME WHAT I WAS ASKING OF HIM!

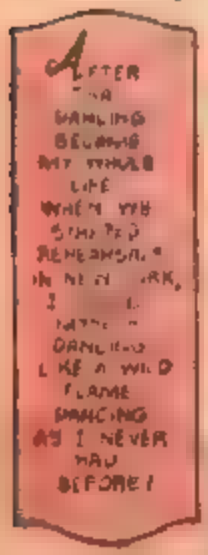
BUT THIS IS MY - I MEAN OUR BIG CHANCE! A BREAK LIKE THIS COMES ONCE IN A LIFETIME.

I DON'T WANT TO STAND IN YOUR WAY, JEAN! IF YOU THINK THIS IS WHAT YOU WANT!

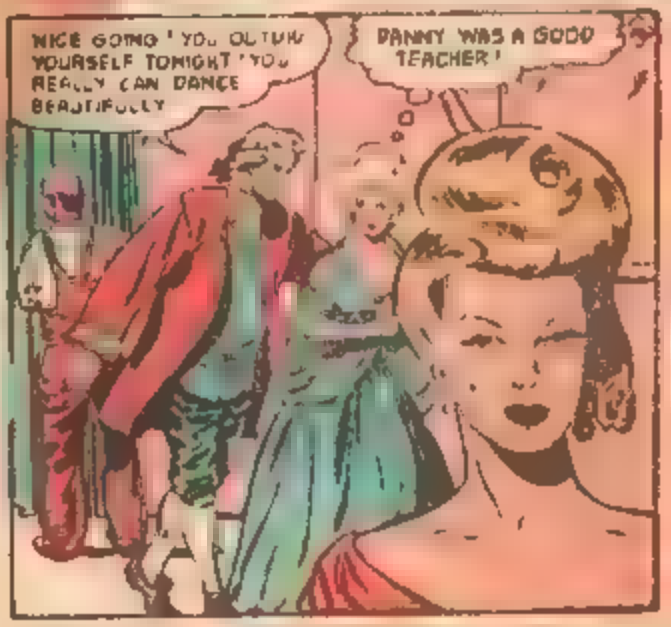
IT'LL BE THE BEST THING WE EVER DID, DARLING! I'LL TALK TO HIM ABOUT YOU! I'M SURE HE'LL WANT YOU, TOO!
OKAY!
I KNEW THAT THE DECISION I HAD FORCED ON DANNY WAS WRONG FOR HIM, BUT I WAS BLINDED BY THE OPPORTUNITY OF JOINING TED SHAW! THE FOLLOWING DAY...
BUT DANNY ISN'T ONLY A DANCER — HE'S A WONDERFUL DANCE ARRANGER! IF YOU'D ONLY TAKE HIM ON-
DANCING IS OUT, I TOLD YOU, MISS GORD! HE WANTS TO SIGN ON AS ONE OF THE ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS — ALL RIGHT?
I DIDN'T DARE TELL DANNY OF TED SHAW'S RELUCTANT OFFER IN THAT WAY! MY APPROACH WAS MORE DIPLOMATIC!
ONE OF THE ASSISTANT STAGE MANAGERS. YOU KNOW WHAT THAT MEANS! A GLORIFIED STOOGE!
BUT, DARLING — IT'S ONLY TEMPORARY UNTIL HE WORKS YOU INTO THE ACT!
I DON'T KNOW! WE WERE DOING ALL RIGHT...!
IT'LL WORK OUT SWELL, DARLING - YOU'LL SEE!
OKAY, PRETTY-FACE! MAYBE HE'LL GIVE ME A CHANCE TO WORK OUT SOME DANCE ROUTINES!
YOU'RE A PEACH, DANNY
AND SO WE BROKE UP THE ACT TO JOIN TED SHAW! IN THE WEEKS THAT FOLLOWED, DANNY KEPT COACHING ME IN THE ROUTINES OF THE GIRL WHO DANCED OPPOSITE TED SHAW! IT WAS THE STAR'S PART! THAT WAS WHAT I HAD MY EYE ON!
THAT'S IT, BABY! YOU'RE BETTER THAN SHE IS RIGHT NOW!
MAYBE YOU ARE, JEAN! I THINK YOU'RE READY FOR A SOLO NUMBER, ANYWAY!
OHHH, TED! THANKS — THANKS A LOT!


SOLO SPOTS FOLLOWED AFTER THAT — AND AS I BECAME MORE IMPORTANT, TED'S INTEREST IN ME DEEPENED!
I'M HAVING DINNER WITH SOME FRIENDS, JEAN! HOW ABOUT JOINING THE PARTY?
I'D LOVE TO, TED
WHERE WILL WE EAT TONIGHT, DEAR?
OH DARN! TED'S TAKING ME TO SOME PARTY. HE WANTS ME TO MEET SOME IMPORTANT PEOPLE
YOU DON'T MIND, DO YOU?
IT'S ALL RIGHT! HAVE FUN!
AS I LEFT WITH TED AND HIS PARTY THAT NIGHT, I NOTICED DANNY ALONE IN THE DARKENED THEATRE. THE SIGHT OF HIS FORLORN FIGURE STABBED AT MY CONSCIENCE!
HE CAN'T EXPECT ME TO PASS UP THESE BREAKS! MEETING THE RIGHT PEOPLE IS ALL A PART OF ACHIEVING SUCCESS!
BECAME ONE OF TED'S INNER CIRCLE AND SO GAN TO SEE LESS AND LESS OF DANNY!
WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US, JEAN? I HARDLY EVER SEE YOU ANY MORE
WELL DON'T BLAME ME! I CAN'T VERY WELL SNUB THE STAR OF THE SHOW WHEN HE ASKS ME OUT!
BY THE TIME THE DANCE TROUPE REACHED THE END OF THEIR ENGAGEMENT, I WAS DOING A FEATURED PART, AND THERE WERE WHISPERS THAT I WOULD SOON REPLACE THE STAR!
WE'RE HEADING FOR NEW YORK NEXT WEEK, JEAN — TO START REHEARSALS FOR A MUSICAL! BUT I WON'T BE ABLE TO RENEW YOUR FRIEND'S CONTRACT!
BUT WHY? DANNY HAS DONE A GOOD JOB!
GOOD JOB — WHAT IS HE, ANYWAY? STAGE MANAGERS ARE A DIME A DOZEN IN NEW YORK! HE'D ONLY BE EXCESS BAGGAGE! YOU EXPLAIN IT TO HIM, WILL YOU?

AFTER I TOLD IT TO DANNY—HIS HARD, ACCUSING GLANCE MADE ME LOOK AWAY GUILTILY!
IT SEEMS THE MUSICAL IS ALL SET AND THEY CAN'T USE YOU! I-I'M SORRY, DANNY! I TRIED—!
NO SMOKING
SURE—SURE YOU D.D!
REALLY—I TRIED MY BEST TO GET HIM TO RENEW—!
LET'S QUIT KIDDING OURSELVES, JEAN! IT'S ABOUT TIME WE WERE HONEST!
YOU'RE ALL SET NOW, AND YOU DON'T NEED ME ANY MORE!
NO—NO—!
NOW THAT YOU'RE IN THE BIG-TIME IT'S EASIER TO GO IT SOLO! I'M JUST A DRAGNET—AND MY PRESENCE PROBABLY BOTHERS YOUR CONSCIENCE!
I'LL CLEAR OUT—AND GLADLY! YOU CERTAINLY AREN'T THE GIRL I THOUGHT I LOVED! I GUESS YOU'LL GET WHERE YOU WANT TO GO—BUT I WON'T BE AROUND TO APPLAUD!
GOODBYE, JEAN! THANKS FOR THE MEMORY!
DANNY—!
HE WAS GONE NOW—AND I KNEW IT WAS FOR GOOD! BUT MINGLED WITH REGRET AT LOSING HIM WAS A FEELING OF RELIEF! HE HAD BEEN RIGHT!
NOTHING IS GOING TO STOP ME NOW! NOTHING! I'LL REACH THE TOP—I KNOW IT!

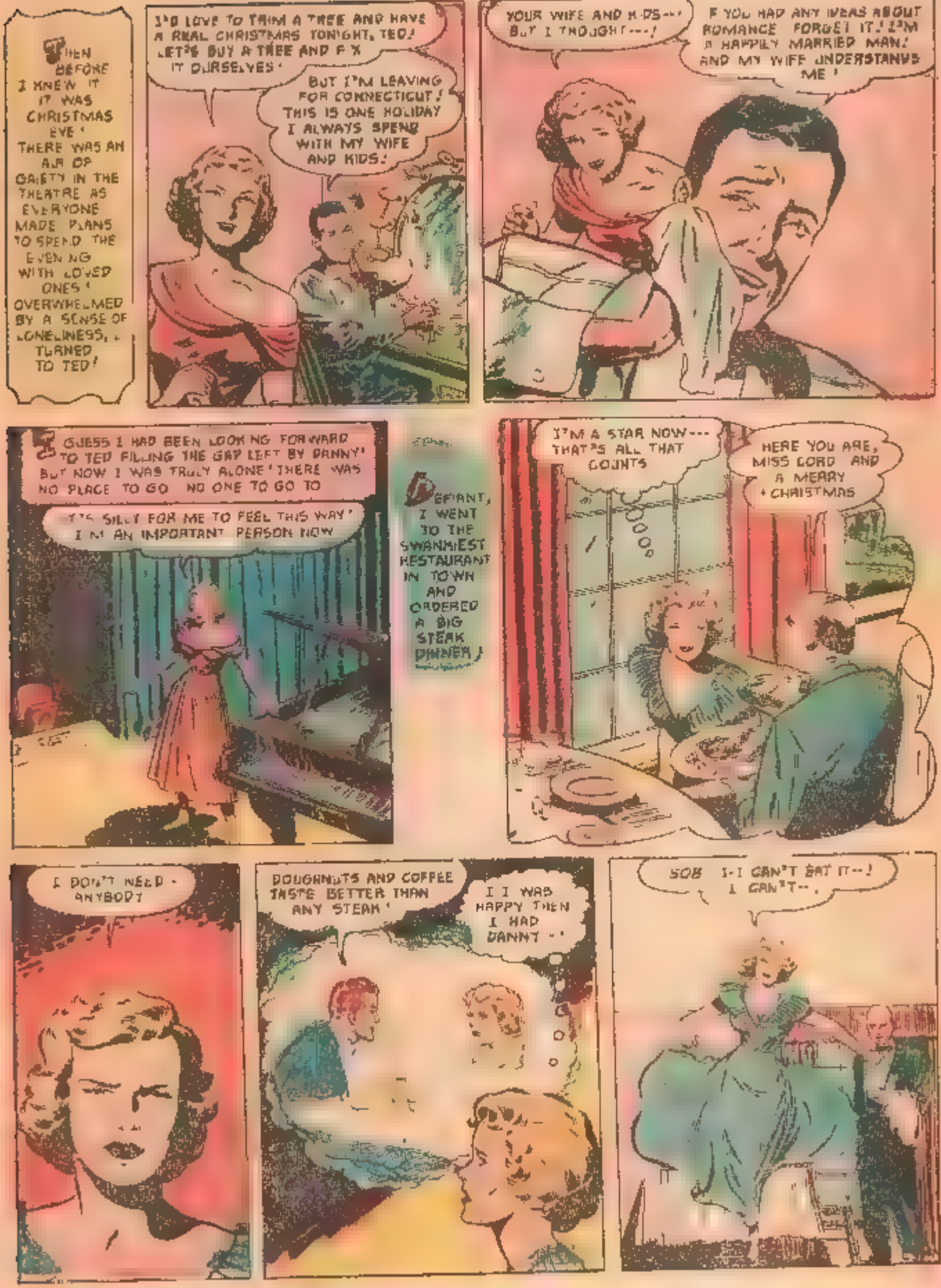

After the darling became my whole life when we started rehearsals in New York, I [illegible] dancing like a wild flame dancing as I never had before!

I had arrived at last! The show opened to critical acclaim and there were reams of praise about my dancing! But as the show settled down to a long run, I found something vaguely missing

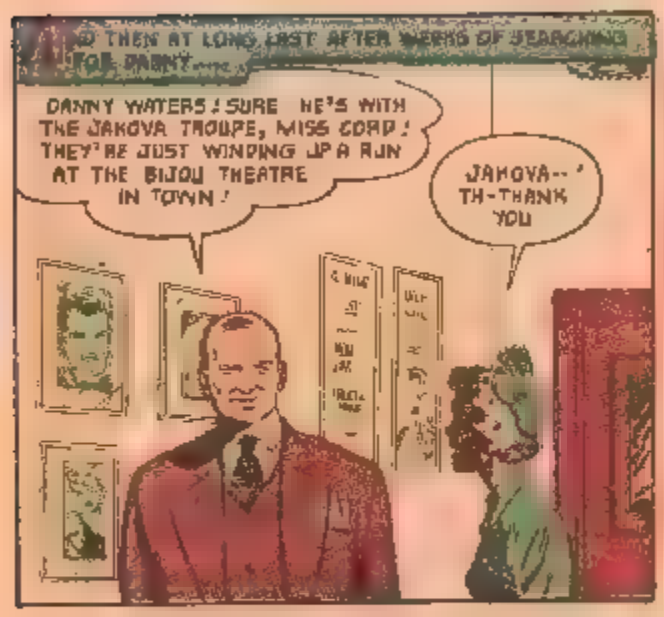


What's the matter, Jean? You look unhappy!
I feel kind of restless tonight, Ted! Let's have dinner and drop into one of the night clubs!
Night Club

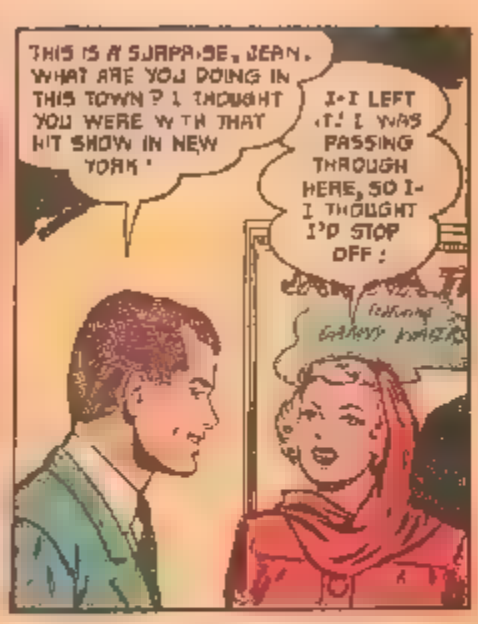
Sorry, Jean, but I have to attend a meeting of the Angels for an accounting! Why don't you do some Christmas shopping?
I have no one to buy anything for!

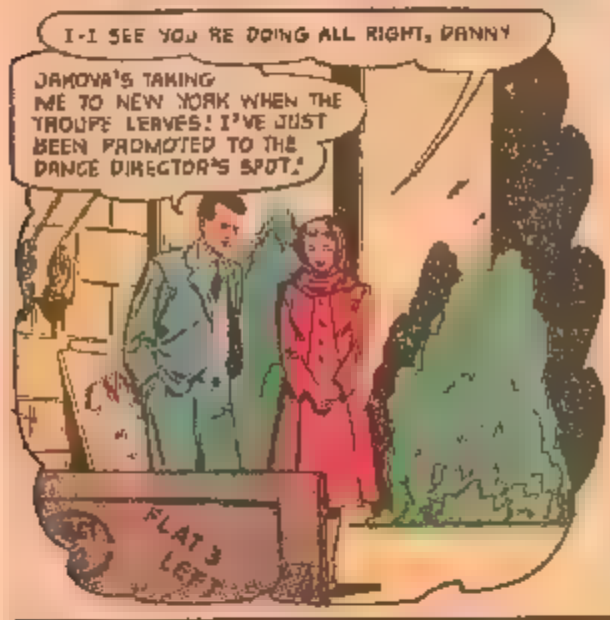

THEN BEFORE I KNEW IT IT WAS CHRISTMAS EVE! THERE WAS AN AIR OF GAIETY IN THE THEATRE AS EVERYONE MADE PLANS TO SPEND THE EVENING WITH LOVED ONES! OVERWHELMED BY A SENSE OF LONELINESS, I TURNED TO TED!
I'D LOVE TO TRIM A TREE AND HAVE A REAL CHRISTMAS TONIGHT, TED! LET'S BUY A TREE AND FIX IT OURSELVES!
BUT I'M LEAVING FOR CONNECTICUT! THIS IS ONE HOLIDAY I ALWAYS SPEND WITH MY WIFE AND KIDS!
YOUR WIFE AND KIDS--! BUT I THOUGHT---!
IF YOU HAD ANY IDEAS ABOUT ROMANCE FORGET IT! I'M A HAPPILY MARRIED MAN! AND MY WIFE UNDERSTANDS ME!
I GUESS I HAD BEEN LOOKING FORWARD TO TED FILLING THE GAP LEFT BY DANNY! BUT NOW I WAS TRULY ALONE! THERE WAS NO PLACE TO GO NO ONE TO GO TO
IT'S SILLY FOR ME TO FEEL THIS WAY! I'M AN IMPORTANT PERSON NOW
DEFIANT, I WENT TO THE SWANKIEST RESTAURANT IN TOWN AND ORDERED A BIG STEAK DINNER!
I'M A STAR NOW--- THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS
HERE YOU ARE, MISS LORD AND A MERRY CHRISTMAS
I DON'T NEED ANYBODY
DOUGHNUTS AND COFFEE TASTE BETTER THAN ANY STEAK!
I I WAS HAPPY THEN I HAD DANNY--
SOB I-I CAN'T EAT IT--! I CAN'T--

MEMORIES OF DANNY AND HAPPIER DAYS TORMENTED ME UNMERCIFULLY!
SOB OH, MY DARLING! HOW RIGHT YOU WERE! WE HAD EVERYTHING -JUST BEING TOGETHER! I NEED YOU SO MUCH NOW.
WHO KNOWS WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM? BUT I'LL FIND HIM- I'LL FIND HIM AND MAKE IT UP TO HIM!
NO ONE TO LOVE
CONVINCED THAT DANNY HAD LOST ALL HEART, AND IN HIS DISILLUSION WITH LIFE HAD HIT THE SKIDS, I STARTED A FRANTIC SEARCH FOR HIM THE FOLLOWING DAY I WENT THROUGH ALL THE CHEAP THEATRICAL BOARDING HOUSES!
DANNY WATERS! NOPE--I NEVER HEARD OF HIM!
DANNY WATERS! DO YOU KNOW HIM? CAN YOU TELL ME WHERE I CAN FIND HIM?
NEVER BOOKED ANYONE WITH THAT NAME, MISS CORD!
HE COULDN'T STAY HERE UNLESS HE HAD THE REN THIS S NO FLOP HOUSE, SIS ER!
I THINK I HEARD OF EVERY SMALL ACT IN THE BUSINESS -BUT NEVER HEARD OF A DANCER BY THAT NAME
ROOMS
WAS PRAN E NOW AS A VISUAL TE THE WORST: MAYBE HE WAS SICK BROKE LONELY AND FORGOTTEN! BUT I WAS STILL WITHIN MY POWER TO PUT HIM BACK ON HIS FEET! IT WAS MY ONE CHANCE TO MAKE AMENDS I WENT TO TED
WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND, JEAN?
I'M LEAVING THE SHOW
YOU'RE LEAVING THE SHOW! BUT WHY?
I-I'VE HAD THE WRONG PERSPECTIVE, TED THE WRONG IDEAS! I VALUED STARDOM ABOVE THE MOST TREASURED POSSESSION IN ALL THE WORLD--DANNY'S LOVE! I'VE GOT TO FIND HIM NOW!

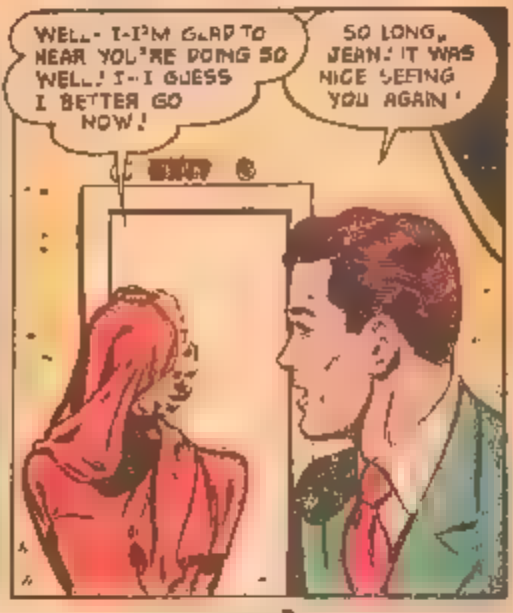

AND THEN AT LONG LAST AFTER WEEKS OF SEARCHING FOR DANNY....
DANNY WATERS! SURE HE'S WITH THE JAKOVA TROUPE, MISS CORD! THEY'RE JUST WINDING UP A RUN AT THE BIJOU THEATRE IN TOWN!
JAKOVA--! TH-THANK YOU

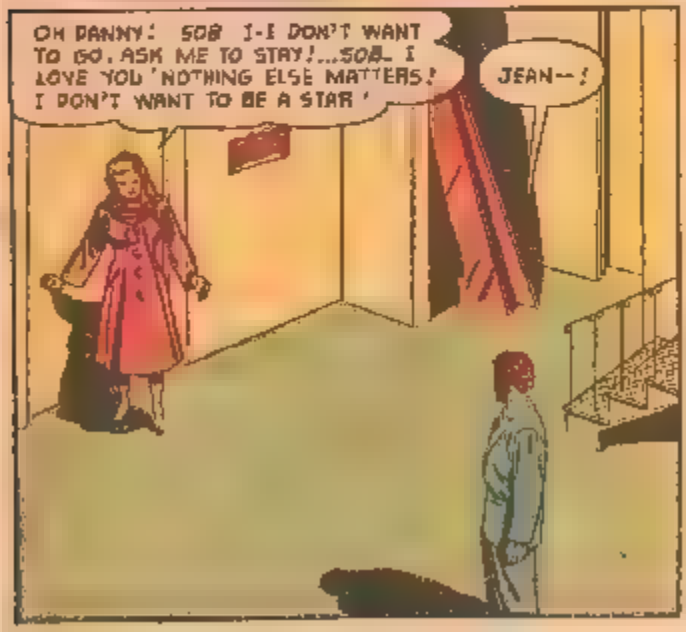
WITHOUT STOPPING TO THINK, I DASHED TO THE THEATRE! SUDDENLY, HE WAS STANDING BEFORE ME--LOOKING HANDSOMER--AND SEEMINGLY MORE HAPPY AND PROSPEROUS THAN EVER BEFORE! THIS WAS ANYTHING BUT THE DOWNTROPPEN FIGURE I HAD VISUALIZED!

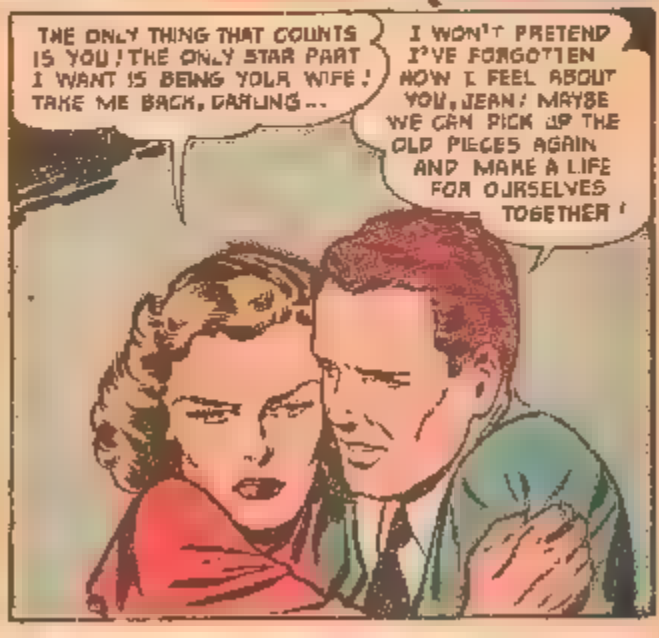

THIS IS A SURPRISE, JEAN. WHAT ARE YOU DOING IN THIS TOWN? I THOUGHT YOU WERE WITH THAT HIT SHOW IN NEW YORK!
I-I LEFT IT! I WAS PASSING THROUGH HERE, SO I-I THOUGHT I'D STOP OFF!


I-I SEE YOU'RE DOING ALL RIGHT, DANNY
JAKOVA'S TAKING ME TO NEW YORK WHEN THE TROUPE LEAVES! I'VE JUST BEEN PROMOTED TO THE DANCE DIRECTOR'S SPOT!
FLAT 3 LEFT

THE BITTER IRONY OF IT! NOT EVEN THE SOLACE OF HELPING HIM WAS LEFT TO ME! HE HAD DONE WELL ON HIS OWN! THERE WERE MORE WORDS... ROUTINE QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS! THEN I KNEW IT WAS TIME TO GO!






THE ONLY THING THAT COUNTS IS YOU! THE ONLY STAR PART I WANT IS BEING YOUR WIFE! TAKE ME BACK, DARLING--
I WON'T PRETEND I'VE FORGOTTEN HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU, JEAN! MAYBE WE CAN PICK UP THE OLD PIECES AGAIN AND MAKE A LIFE FOR OURSELVES TOGETHER!

FAREWELL MY LOVE

By John Martin

THE STUDIO echoed to the strains of Tschaikovsky. At the piano, Jan Barden frowned in irritation as her eyes stumbled over inked in corrections on the score.

Violet ink. Rosalind's trade mark. Jan looked round the studio in sudden distaste. A booking agent's task was simply to arrange engagements, she knew. But Rosalind Ferril had long since overstepped the bounds, taking the piano duo of Jan Barden and Barry O'Brien in hand like two trained schnauzers, bent to the leash.

It was bad enough that Ros had cleverly arranged for their practicing studio to be just down the hall from her office in the converted, brownstone front off Central Park. Bad enough that Ros had managed to lay out their tours to conform to her business routes. And worse, Jan realized, that Ros had somehow accomplished the trick of whisking Barry off to supper three nights out of every week when they were in town.

But now this. To correct Jan's own musical scores!

Just then Ros entered brandishing a sheaf of telegrams.

"Ros," Jan began firmly, indicating the violet-inked correction, "I'm perfectly able to do my own scoring. Besides, I'd thank you to remember that this is a duo team. Barry and I generally make all changes together."

"Well, Barry agreed on this one," Ros remarked coolly. "I'm not musically illiterate, you know, Jan. And Barry thought that shortening that passage by a full bar was an excellent idea. I just put it there for your comment, that's all."

Jan fumed silently, her face a mask. In point of fact, the change was an improvement. She composed herself immediately.

"All right, Ros," she said quietly. "I'm sorry. I thought you'd arbitrarily . . ."

"Perish the thought, my dear!" Ros exclaimed airily. She waved the sheaf of telegrams in the air. "Sit back and listen to this. And count the money while I read. 'Your proposition of separate tours for Jan Barden and Barry O'Brien excellent. Book them within a week of each other. Signed Wellman, Bridgault Theaters!'" Ros tapped the sheet. "The others are just as enthusiastic, darling!"

"Separate tours?" Jan cried, agitated suddenly. "But, in the name of heaven, why, Ros?"

"More money, my dear! In fact, twice as much. Don't you see, by splitting the tour of such a famous pair, you make it obligatory for the public to attend both concerts in any given circuit town. We double the profits!"

"But what explanation will you give to the newspapers?" Jan demanded.

Ros dismissed the objection with a wave of the hand.

"The usual thing. Perfectly believable. We'll just say that there's been a change in plan. Both of you getting rusty playing together. That sort of thing." She looked narrowly at Jan.

"Does Barry know about this?" Jan asked coldly. She was remembering Barry's promises of three months back that they'd never break up the team. And Barry had hinted, then, at last, of marriage.

"Certainly, darling!" Barry said. He had come silently into the room. "What's more, I think it's an excellent idea." Barry sank into a comfortable chair. "You'd love it, Jan, getting away from me for two months. Besides, Ros thinks I need a change of viewpoint, myself. I think she's right. In the autumn we'll get together as usual, a better team than ever!" Ros nodded vigorously as Barry concluded.

Jan's head swam. Two months! Her mouth narrowed bitterly. Why, after all, should she think she owned Barry any more than Ros? Since they'd started as a team a year before she'd never even told him she'd been in love with him. Jan turned to the door, picking up her gay hat with jaunty aplomb that hid her breaking heart.

"You're starting about the same time on your own business rounds, aren't you, Ros?" she asked.

Ros nodded, handing the sheaf of telegrams to Barry.

"We'll be bumping into each other once or twice, darling," she said. "As it happens, though my own itinerary is much the same as Barry's." She laughed. "I'll keep an eye on him for you. Keep the admiring public—especially the girls—away."

Barry smiled agreeably.

"Good thing," he said, looking at Jan. "And Ros will be able to offer criticism after my concerts. She gave me some excellent pointers yesterday, at my apartment when I was practicing. Never realized how rusty I'd gotten."

So they'd been alone together at Barry's

apartment. Jan's face stiffened in a frozen smile. She waved goodbye. It was in the outside hall that the tears came at last

The hardest thing was saying goodbye—and Barry was particularly cordial at the station. He handed her a bunch of flowers, fragrant and multi-colored. When the train started he gripped her hand. But he didn't kiss her as he always had. Jan's last glimpse of him was with Ros, who led him triumphantly up into the station. Then the train got under way, its wheels hammering a terrible symphony of farewell in hammer blows at her heart.

The beginning of the tour was a triumph. Pittsburgh and Chicago gave her rave notices Strangely enough, after each performance, she thought wryly, she was playing better than she'd ever played before. Some deeper emotion seemed to be moving her fingers as they hit the keyboard, now. But she knew, too, that something was missing. And that something was Barry. Her technique was what it had always been, sparkling, perfect, her warmth of emotion a throbbing, passionate pulse that reached beyond her music. But she always felt that strange lack. Always she looked up involuntarily as if expecting to see Barry across the stage from her, at another piano.

The critics, the public applauded as they always had.

And then, on the return trip, with half the tour still before her, she had a stopover at a small town. A fever gripped her, exhausting, draining her last reserves of strength. Her train pulled into Buffalo the next night, to be met by a waiting doctor and ambulance.

"I'll be all right, doctor," she insisted feverishly as he made a preliminary examination.

"My dear, you can't even think straight now, much less play," he said, as the ambulance roared through the silent, dark streets to the hospital And then, in her private room, as her temperature rose with the epidemic flu, now common to the whole area, he said: "That isn't all that's wrong with you, young lady." He looked at her and winked. She flushed. The doctor tapped the region of his heart. "Something wrong around here, I'd say. And nothing medical, either!"

Before she fell asleep, she had the nurse send Ros a telegram in Chicago. Ros had to be informed as Jan was due to open in Buffalo in two days. And Barry would be in Chicago now, too. Maybe, maybe he'd write, or . . .

In the morning there was no reply from Ros. Puzzled, weak and exhausted, still trembling with fever, she sent another telegram and then a third. Hours before she was to open, no reply had come. The theater manager called, told her he'd have to take the concert off the posters, return the ticket money.

She listened to the nurse who brought the message almost without hearing Then she seemed to sink into a kind of raw, ragged nightmare of sleep where jeering faces floated before her, Rosalind's face. Barry's.

In the morning, the nurse brought the papers. The fever was gone, now, but Jan lay weak as a kitten in her bed, flexing her fingers. It was going to be a month or so, she knew, before she'd be back in shape.

"Aren't you going to look at the concert notices?" the nurse smiled.

"Can't imagine why," Jan said. "I never did like to read a cancellation review. They usually substitute high-school bands. And the public starts to hate you."

"I'll get your breakfast," the nurse said. When she left the room, Jan couldn't stand seeing the paper folded and mute by her side. In an instant it was open to the concert and theater page. Her eyes widened The big headline plainly read, BARRY O'BRIEN SUBSTITUTE AT BARDEN RECITAL. BRILLIANT PERFORMANCE. "Brilliant performance," she murmured happily, and then Barry came in with the breakfast tray. He put it in position, bent over and kissed her, grinning. He popped toast into her mouth as started to speak.

"But Barry, darling," Jan began, "How . . . when . . . ?"

He sat back as she sipped her coffee. "Simple," he said. "Ros hid your telegrams from me. Until she came down with flu, that is. I guess she thought she was going to conk out. You should have heard that confession. Oh, she'll be all right," he said hastily. "Just a booking agent without a piano duo, that's all."

"You—you must have flown here . . ." Jan said weakly.

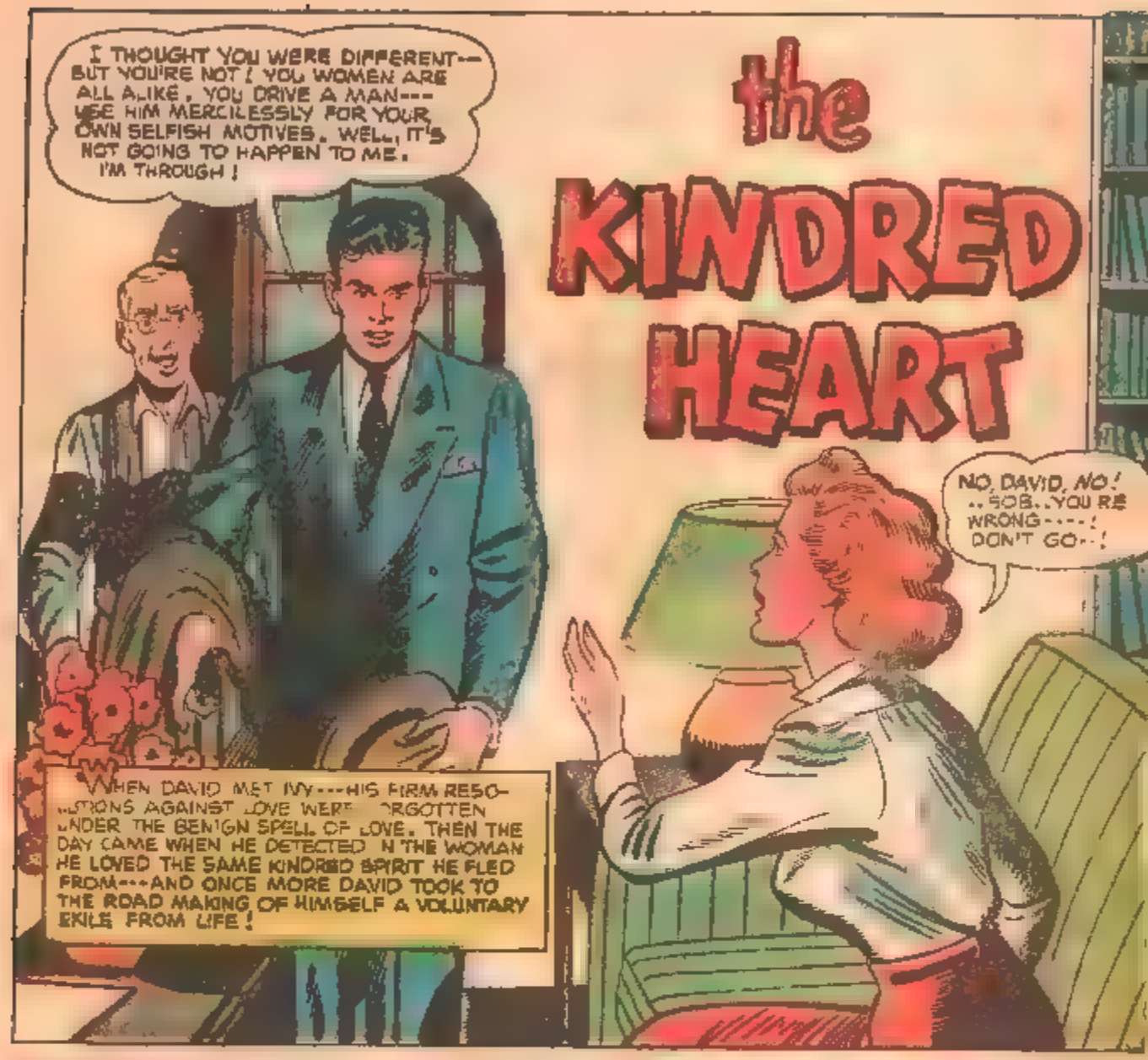
"I did. Just in time to keep the posters up. Barden and O'Brien came through again—together." He dropped his eyes "Frankly, Jan, I'm no good without you any more. I guess I never was."

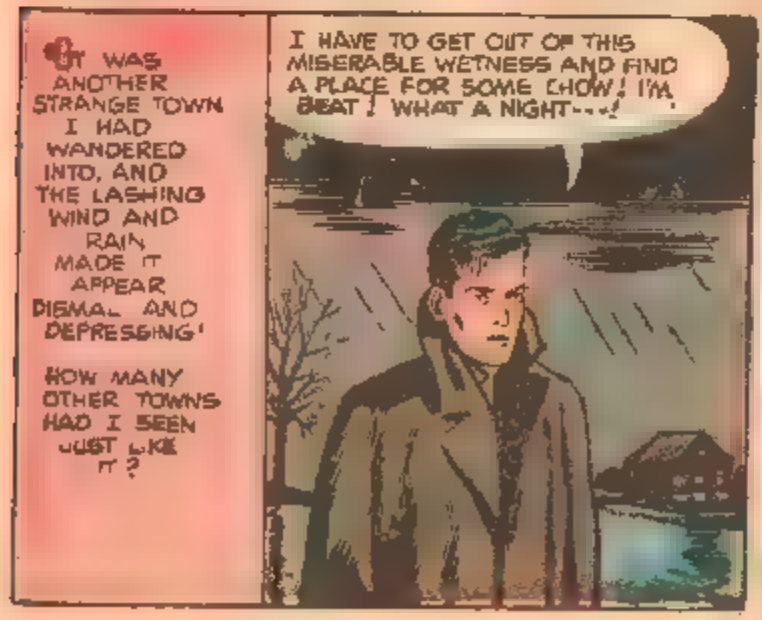
She grinned, taking his hand. "But you played brilliantly last night! The paper said so!"

"SURE," he said. "I was playing for you. And you were across the piano from me." He paused. "How about making it stick this time, Jan?" he asked hopefully. "You know, with that glue they sell you down at City Hall?" He kissed her again.

"As soon as I can walk, sweetheart," she murmured in assent. "Just as soon as I can knock a rabbit over with one punch."

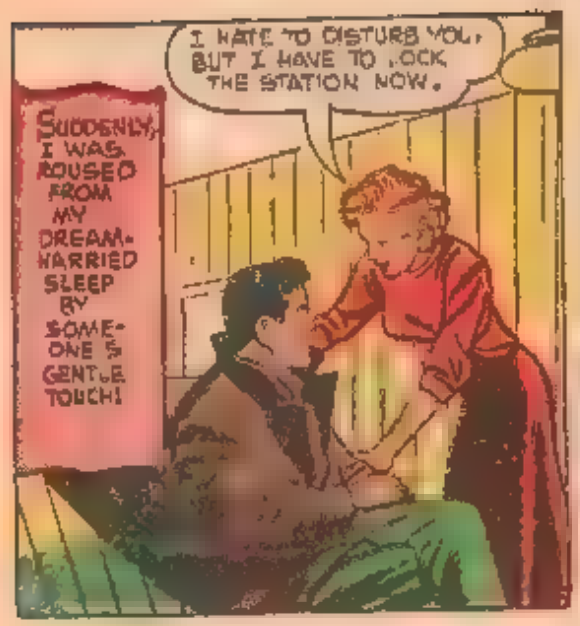
THE END

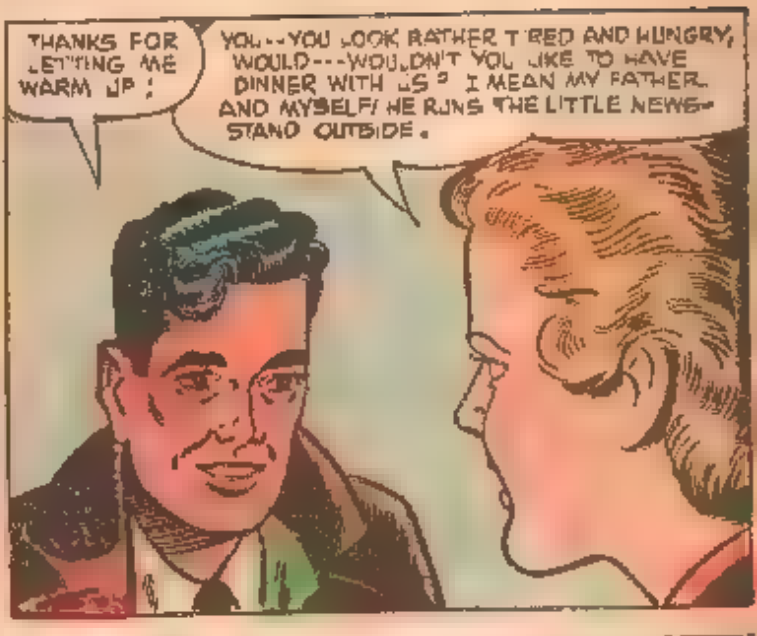

I THOUGHT YOU WERE DIFFERENT--BUT YOU'RE NOT! YOU WOMEN ARE ALL ALIKE. YOU DRIVE A MAN--- USE HIM MERCILESSLY FOR YOUR OWN SELFISH MOTIVES. WELL, IT'S NOT GOING TO HAPPEN TO ME. I'M THROUGH!
the KINDRED HEART
NO, DAVID, NO! ..SOB..YOU RE WRONG----! DON'T GO--!
WHEN DAVID MET IVY---HIS FIRM RESO- ..STIONS AGAINST LOVE WERE ORGOTTEN UNDER THE BENIGN SPELL OF LOVE. THEN THE DAY CAME WHEN HE DETECTED N THE WOMAN HE LOVED THE SAME KINDRED SPIRIT HE FLED FROM---AND ONCE MORE DAVID TOOK TO THE ROAD MAKING OF HIMSELF A VOLUNTARY EXILE FROM LIFE!

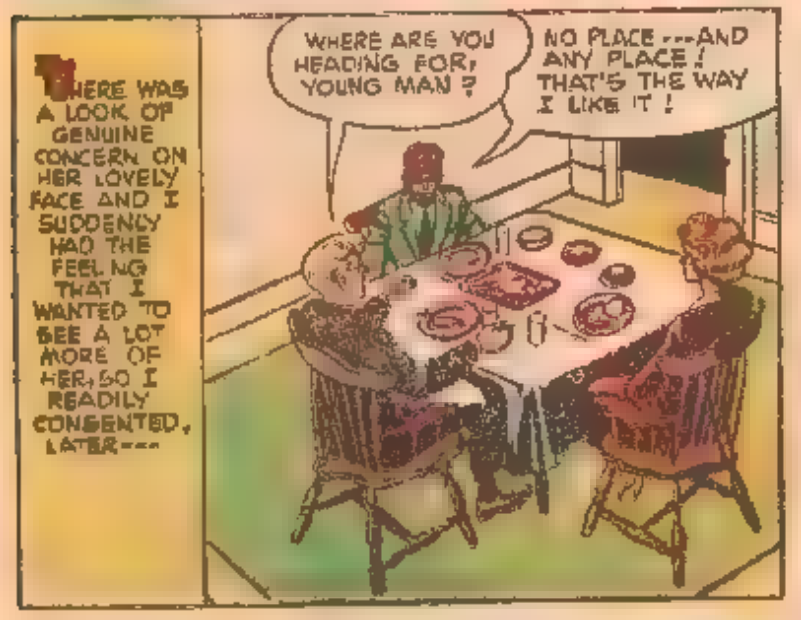

IT WAS ANOTHER STRANGE TOWN I HAD WANDERED INTO, AND THE LASHING WIND AND RAIN MADE IT APPEAR DISMAL AND DEPRESSING!
HOW MANY OTHER TOWNS HAD I SEEN JUST LIKE IT?
I HAVE TO GET OUT OF THIS MISERABLE WETNESS AND FIND A PLACE FOR SOME CHOW! I'M BEAT! WHAT A NIGHT---!

THE RAILROAD STATION! AT LEAST I CAN GET WARM IN THERE!

THE PLACE WAS EMPTY EXCEPT FOR THE TICKET SELLER, A PRETTY, YOUNG CREATURE WHO REGARDED ME WITH DEEP SOMBRE EYES.
BUT I WAS TOO TIRED TO NOTICE ANYBODY MUCH AND THE HEAT OF THE STOVE SOOTHED & LULLED ME INTO A DEEP DROWSINESS.
HOW MANY PLACES LIKE THIS HAVE I BEEN IN, A HUNDRED --- FIVE HUNDRED? IT'S BEEN A LONG, LONG TRAIL OF WANDERING.
"I WAS THE OLDEST OF SEVEN IN MY FAMILY AND AS I LET MY MIND SLIP BACK TO THE PAST, I COULD HEAR MY MOTHER'S TIRED, COMPLAINING VOICE ONCE MORE.
HOW CAN I BUY YOU THE NEW CLOTHES AND THINGS YOU NEED IF YOUR FATHER DIDN'T SEND US A CHECK THIS MONTH?
WHERE IS POP NOW, MA? SINGAPORE? AFRICA?
IT'S TOO FAR FROM HOME -AND THE RESPONSIBILITIES THAT ARE HIS, I CAN'T GO ON THIS WAY MUCH LONGER! BEING A SEAMAN IS NO LIFE FOR A MARRIED MAN.
WAIT'LL HE COMES ASHORE, MA! YOU'LL SEE ALL THE PRESENTS HE'LL HAVE FOR US AND THE STORIES HE'LL HAVE TO TELL US!
AND WHEN POP FINALLY DID COME HOME ON HIS INFREQUENT VISITS ...
SEVEN CHILDREN TO TAKE CARE OF! THEY NEED SCHOOLING---! DON'T YOU EVER THINK OF THAT WHILE YOU'RE A THOUSAND MILES AWAY?
WELL--THE SEA--IS THE ONLY THING I KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT. I'VE BEEN WORKING SHIPS SINCE I WAS A KID! SURE I WANT TO HELP THE FAMILY--BUT--
DON'T LET MOM BOTHER YOU, POP! IT MUST BE GREAT TO BE A SEAMAN! TELL ME WHERE YOU'VE BEEN? MY FRIENDS WANT TO HEAR ALL ABOUT IT TOO!
WHY, SURE--LET'S GO OUT AND TELL THEM ALL ABOUT IT! I'VE QUITE A FEW YARNS THIS TIME!
IF WE BUY THIS LITTLE GROCERY STORE, IT'LL BRING IN ENOUGH MONEY SO WE CAN KEEP GOING. IT'S OUR LAST CHANCE TO MAKE A LIFE FOR OURSELVES!
ALL RIGHT I'LL TRY THE STORE!
POOR DAD---ANCHORED FOR LIFE! THAT'S WHY I LEFT AS SOON AS I COULD TO SEE THE WORLD--AND WATCH THAT NOBODY TRAPS ME.


I HATE TO DISTURB YOU, BUT I HAVE TO LOCK THE STATION NOW.
SUDDENLY, I WAS ROUSED FROM MY DREAM-HARRIED SLEEP BY SOMEONE'S GENTLE TOUCH!

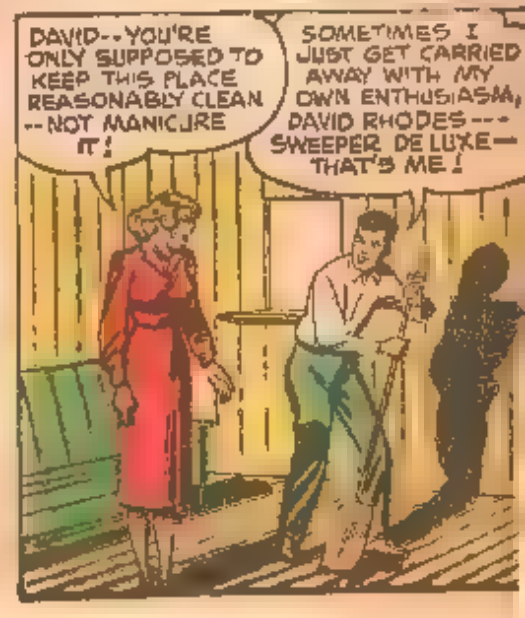

THANKS FOR LETTING ME WARM UP!
YOU--YOU LOOK RATHER T'RED AND HUNGRY, WOULD---WOULDN'T YOU LIKE TO HAVE DINNER WITH US? I MEAN MY FATHER AND MYSELF! HE RUNS THE LITTLE NEWS-STAND OUTSIDE.


THERE WAS A LOOK OF GENUINE CONCERN ON HER LOVELY FACE AND I SUDDENLY HAD THE FEELING THAT I WANTED TO BEE A LOT MORE OF HER, SO I READILY CONSENTED. LATER---
WHERE ARE YOU HEADING FOR, YOUNG MAN?
NO PLACE---AND ANY PLACE! THAT'S THE WAY I LIKE IT!

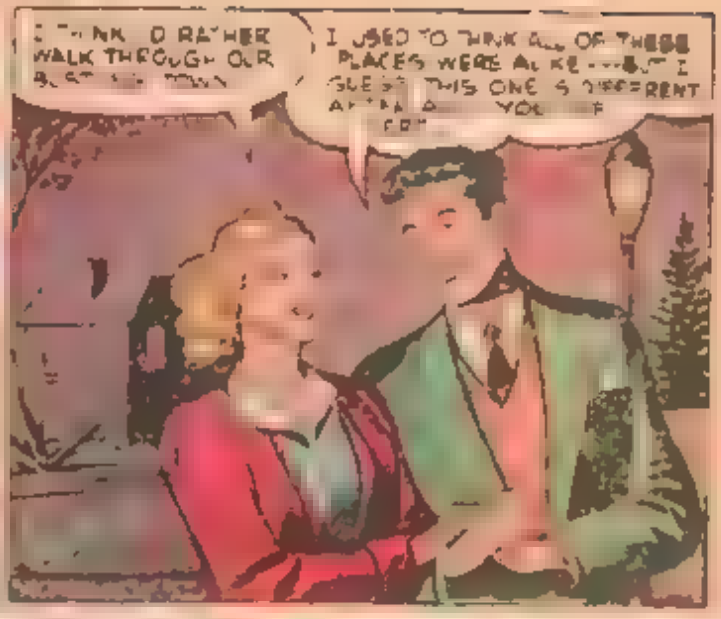
IF YOU'D LIKE TO STAY AROUND FOR A WHILE, WE CAN USE SOMEBODY TO HELP WITH THE CHORES AROUND THE STATION---AND MAYBE YOU CAN HELP DAD WITH HIS STAND. YOU LOOK AS THOUGH YOU NEED RESTING UP.

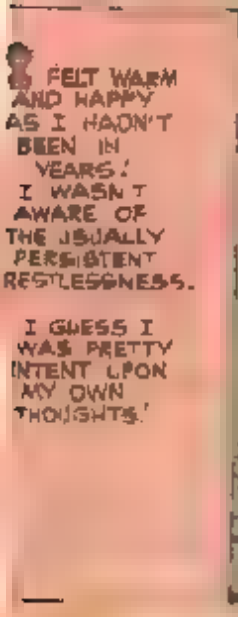
STRANGELY ENOUGH, DURING THE WEEKS FOLLOWING I FOUND MYSELF CONTENTEDLY ROOTED!

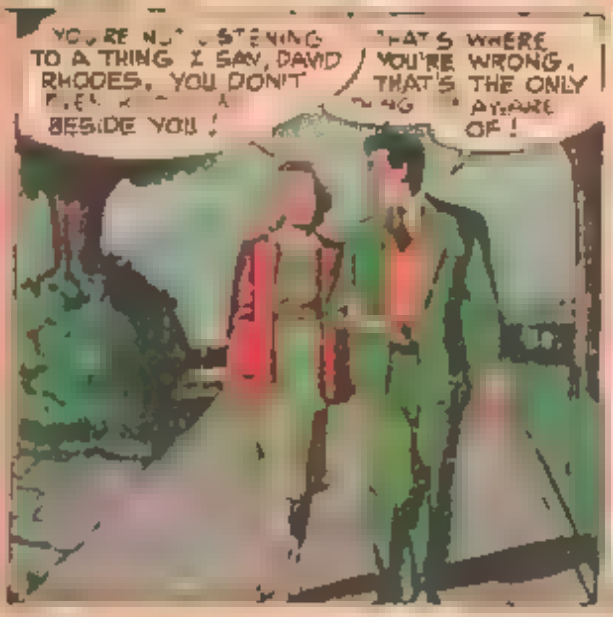
NY HAD A LOT TO DO WITH THAT FEELING!


DAVID--YOU'RE ONLY SUPPOSED TO KEEP THIS PLACE REASONABLY CLEAN --NOT MANICURE IT!
SOMETIMES I JUST GET CARRIED AWAY WITH MY OWN ENTHUSIASM, DAVID RHODES--- SWEEPER DE LUXE— THAT'S ME!

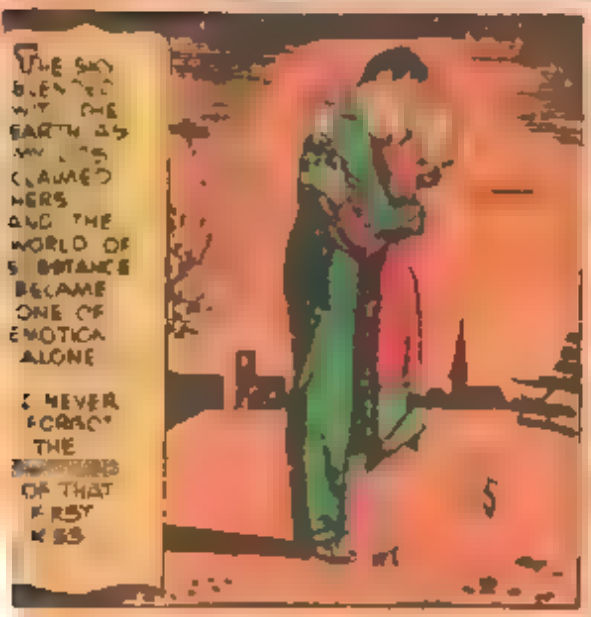
THEN -ONE EVENING -
WHY DON'T YOU LET'S SEE A MOVIE TONIGHT!

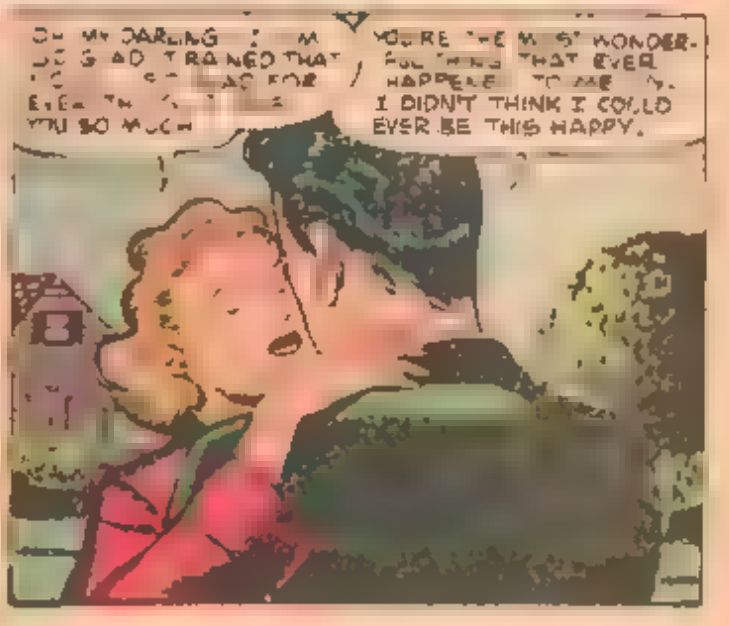

I THINK I'D RATHER WALK THROUGH OUR BEST PARK TOWN
I USED TO THINK ALL OF THESE PLACES WERE ALIKE---BUT I GUESS THIS ONE'S DIFFERENT


I FELT WARM AND HAPPY AS I HADN'T BEEN IN YEARS! I WASN'T AWARE OF THE USUALLY PERSISTENT RESTLESSNESS.
I GUESS I WAS PRETTY INTENT UPON MY OWN THOUGHTS.

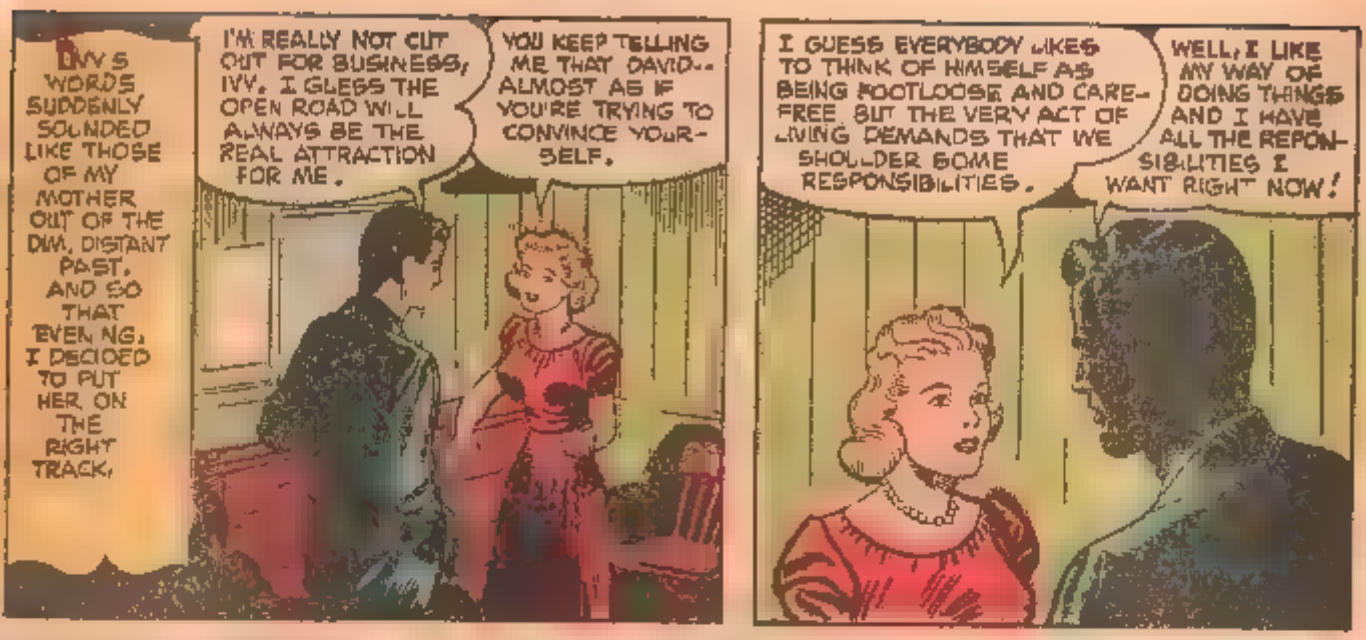

YOU'RE NOT LISTENING TO A THING I SAY, DAVID RHODES. YOU DON'T REALIZE I'M BESIDE YOU!
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG. THAT'S THE ONLY THING I'M AWARE OF!

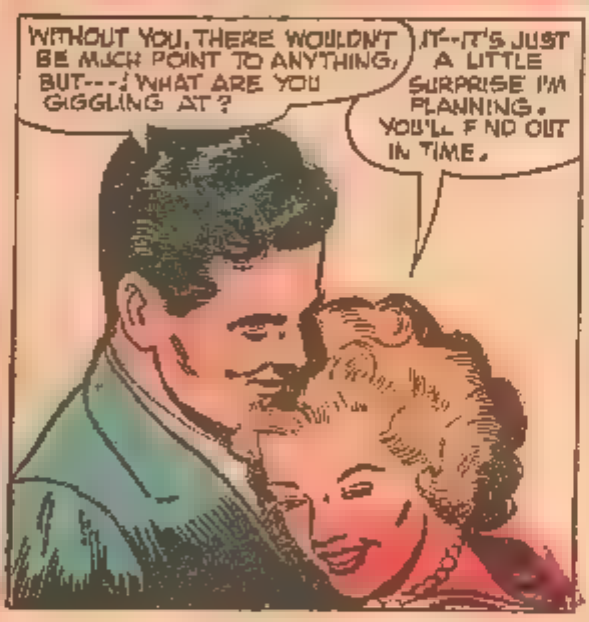
I'M IN LOVE WITH YOU!


THE SKY BLENDED WITH THE EARTH AS MY LIPS CLAIMED HERS AND THE WORLD OF SUBSTANCE BECAME ONE OF EMOTION ALONE
I NEVER FORGOT THE OF THAT FIRST KISS


OH MY DARLING! I'M SO GLAD I TRAINED THAT EVEN THOUGH I CARE FOR YOU SO MUCH
YOU'RE THE MOST WONDERFUL THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME. I DIDN'T THINK I COULD EVER BE THIS HAPPY.

MY FEET FORGOT THEIR WANDERLUST AFTER THAT AND THE ONLY THING I LOOKED FORWARD TO WAS THE TIME I SPENT WITH IVY.
WATCH IT POP. HERE COMES THE BOSS!
HOW ARE YOU TWO, BIG BUSINESSMEN DOING?
HE'S DOING FINE, IVY. BUSINESS HAS REALLY PICKED UP. I DON'T KNOW HOW HE DOES IT!
IT'S HIS PERSONALITY. FOLKS CAN'T HELP LOVING HIM, DAD.
S ONE OF THOSE FOLKS YOU MY SWEET?
I'LL NOT BE PRESSED INTO ADMITTING IT THIRTY TIMES A DAY.
THERE'S SOMETHING ABOUT YOU...!
DON'T YOU YOUNG PEOPLE HAVE ANY MODESTY ANY MORE?
HI, DAVID. GOT MY MAGAZINE?
RIGHT HERE, MR. PHELPS.
SEE--THEY DON'T BOTHER ASKING ME ANY MORE. IT'S JUST DAVID.
IT'S JUST THAT WE MAKE A GOOD TEAM POP.
IT'S TOO BAD THE TEAM HASN'T SOMETHING BIGGER TO OPERATE. I'M SURE YOU COULD MAKE IT GO! THIS LITTLE NEWSSTAND IS NOTHING, REALLY!

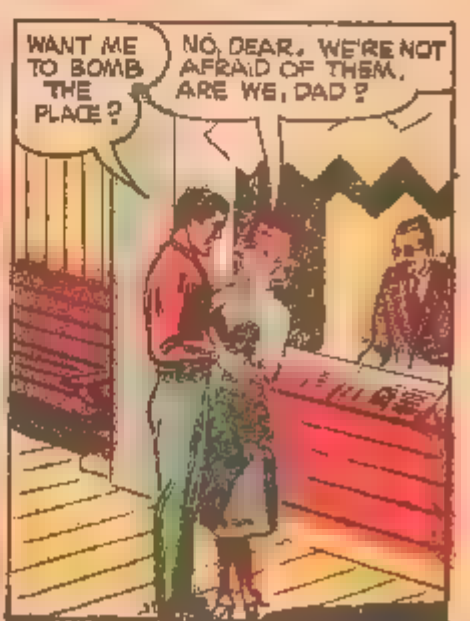

IVY'S WORDS SUDDENLY SOUNDED LIKE THOSE OF MY MOTHER OUT OF THE DIM, DISTANT PAST. AND SO THAT EVENING, I DECIDED TO PUT HER ON THE RIGHT TRACK.
I'M REALLY NOT CUT OUT FOR BUSINESS, IVY. I GUESS THE OPEN ROAD WILL ALWAYS BE THE REAL ATTRACTION FOR ME.
YOU KEEP TELLING ME THAT DAVID-- ALMOST AS IF YOU'RE TRYING TO CONVINCE YOURSELF.
I GUESS EVERYBODY LIKES TO THINK OF HIMSELF AS BEING ROOTLOOSE AND CARE-FREE, BUT THE VERY ACT OF LIVING DEMANDS THAT WE SHOULDER SOME RESPONSIBILITIES.
WELL, I LIKE MY WAY OF DOING THINGS AND I HAVE ALL THE RESPONSIBILITIES I WANT RIGHT NOW!

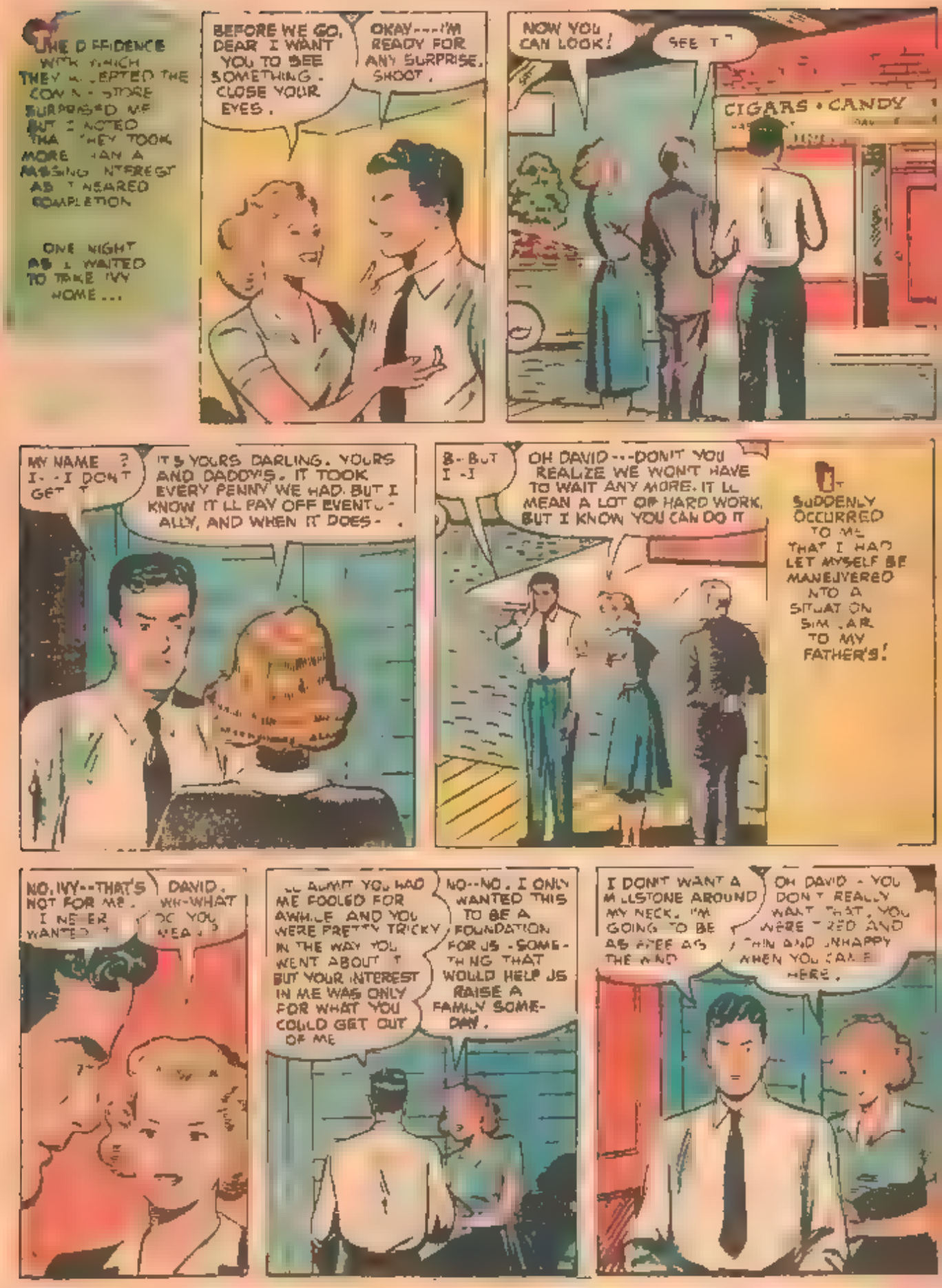

WITHOUT YOU, THERE WOULDN'T BE MUCH POINT TO ANYTHING, BUT---! WHAT ARE YOU GIGGLING AT?
IT--IT'S JUST A LITTLE SURPRISE I'M PLANNING. YOU'LL FIND OUT IN TIME.

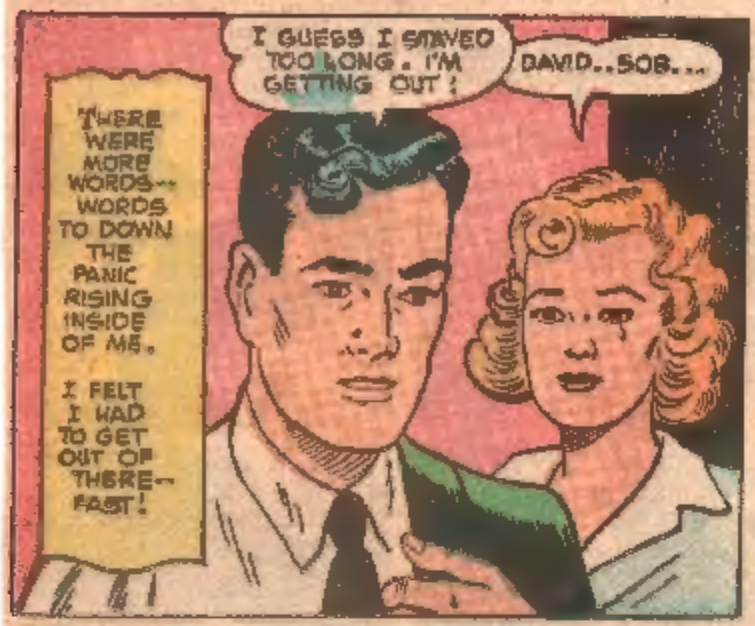
I DIDN'T THINK ANY MORE ABOUT IT.

AND I DISMISSED THE FURTIVE WHISPERS THAT PASSED BETWEEN IVY AND HER FATHER AS SOMETHING INCONSEQUENTIAL.

THEN, ONE DAY....




...HE D FFIDENCE WITH WHICH THEY A...EPTED THE CON...STORE SURPRISED ME BUT I NOTED THA THEY TOOK MORE THAN A PASSING INTEREST AS T NEARED COMPLETION
ONE NIGHT AS I WAITED TO TAKE IVY HOME...
BEFORE WE GO, DEAR I WANT YOU TO SEE SOMETHING. CLOSE YOUR EYES.
OKAY---I'M READY FOR ANY SURPRISE, SHOOT.
NOW YOU CAN LOOK!
SEE T...
CIGARS • CANDY
MY NAME ? I--I DON'T GET T...
IT'S YOURS DARLING. YOURS AND DADDY'S. IT TOOK EVERY PENNY WE HAD. BUT I KNOW IT'LL PAY OFF EVENTU-ALLY, AND WHEN IT DOES-
B-BUT I-I
OH DAVID---DON'T YOU REALIZE WE WON'T HAVE TO WAIT ANY MORE. IT'LL MEAN A LOT OF HARD WORK, BUT I KNOW YOU CAN DO IT
T SUDDENLY OCCURRED TO ME THAT I HAD LET MYSELF BE MANEUVERED INTO A SITUATION SIMILAR TO MY FATHER'S!
NO, IVY--THAT'S NOT FOR ME. I NEVER WANTED T...
DAVID, WH-WHAT DO YOU MEA...
...L ADMIT YOU HAD ME FOOLED FOR AWHILE AND YOU WERE PRETTY TRICKY IN THE WAY YOU WENT ABOUT IT BUT YOUR INTEREST IN ME WAS ONLY FOR WHAT YOU COULD GET OUT OF ME
NO--NO. I ONLY WANTED THIS TO BE A FOUNDATION FOR US - SOMETHING THAT WOULD HELP US RAISE A FAMILY SOMEDAY.
I DON'T WANT A MILLSTONE AROUND MY NECK. I'M GOING TO BE AS FREE AS THE WIND
OH DAVID - YOU DON'T REALLY WANT THAT. YOU WERE TIRED AND THIN AND UNHAPPY WHEN YOU CAME HERE.

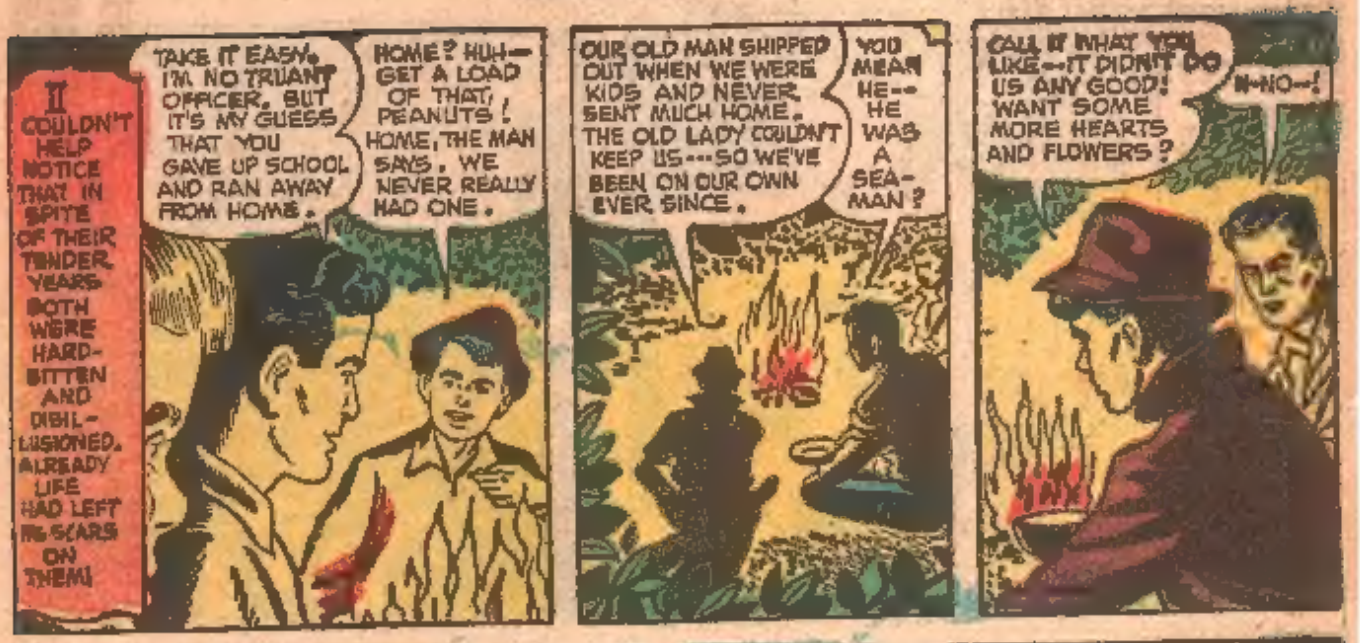

I GUESS I STAYED TOO LONG. I'M GETTING OUT!
DAVID..SOB...
THERE WERE MORE WORDS--WORDS TO DOWN THE PANIC RISING INSIDE OF ME.
I FELT I HAD TO GET OUT OF THERE--FAST!

SURE SHE WAS PRETTY ---BUT WHO WANTS TO BE TIED DOWN ALL MY LIFE. WOMEN ARE ALL ALIKE!
THE TEARS GLISTENED ON HER FACE AS I STRODE OFF.
I DIDN'T DARE TURN AROUND FOR FEAR I'D NEVER GO--!

THE DAYS PASSED--- BUT THE MORE MILES I PUT BETWEEN US---THE MORE VIVID WERE THE MEMORIES OF THE MOMENTS IVY AND I HAD SHARED TOGETHER!

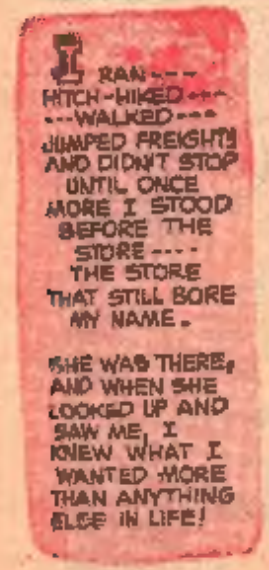
ONE AIMELESS DAY FOLLOWED ANOTHER, UNTIL ONE DAY I DRIFTED INTO A HOBO JUNGLE--
YOU GOT SOME MULLIGAN STEW YOU AIN'T USIN', BUD?
HUH? OH, SURE--! SIT DOWN!

MAYBE IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS---BUT AREN'T YOU TWO KIND OF YOUNG TO BE DOING THIS? ESPECIALLY THE YOUNGSTER HERE.
YOU SAID IT THE FIRST TIME, MISTER. IT'S NONE OF YOUR BUSINESS!

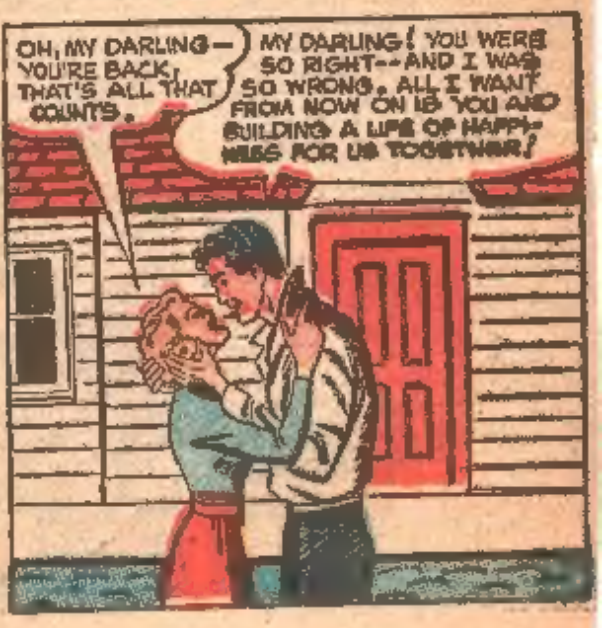

I COULDN'T HELP NOTICE THAT IN SPITE OF THEIR TENDER YEARS BOTH WERE HARD-BITTEN AND DISILLUSIONED. ALREADY LIFE HAD LEFT ITS SCARS ON THEM!
TAKE IT EASY. I'M NO TRUANT OFFICER. BUT IT'S MY GUESS THAT YOU GAVE UP SCHOOL AND RAN AWAY FROM HOME.
HOME? HUH—GET A LOAD OF THAT, PEANUTS! HOME, THE MAN SAYS. WE NEVER REALLY HAD ONE.
OUR OLD MAN SHIPPED OUT WHEN WE WERE KIDS AND NEVER SENT MUCH HOME. THE OLD LADY COULDN'T KEEP US—SO WE'VE BEEN ON OUR OWN EVER SINCE.
YOU MEAN HE—HE WAS A SEAMAN?
CALL IT WHAT YOU LIKE—IT DIDN'T DO US ANY GOOD! WANT SOME MORE HEARTS AND FLOWERS?
N-NO—!

IT DAWNED ON ME THEN, THAT IF IT HADN'T BEEN FOR MY MOTHER, I TOO ALONG WITH MY BROTHERS AND SISTERS MIGHT BE SQUATTING IN HOBO JUNGLE CAMPS.
NOW I KNEW WHAT MY MOTHER HAD FOUGHT FOR!
HEY—WHERE ARE YOU GOING? YOU LEFT YOUR GRUB!
YOU CAN HAVE IT! I HAVE TO SEE SOMEBODY!

SO MANY THINGS WERE CLEAR TO ME NOW. NOT ONLY MY MOTHER'S DESPERATE ATTEMPT TO HOLD THE FAMILY TOGETHER—BUT IVY—IVY AND HER PLANS FOR ME—FOR US!
AND I THOUGHT I KNEW IT ALL! WHAT A PRIZE SAP I TURNED OUT TO BE. OH IVY, MY DARLING—IF WE CAN ONLY PICK UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF!


I RAN—HITCH-HIKED—WALKED—JUMPED FREIGHTS AND DIDN'T STOP UNTIL ONCE MORE I STOOD BEFORE THE STORE—THE STORE THAT STILL BORE MY NAME.
SHE WAS THERE, AND WHEN SHE LOOKED UP AND SAW ME, I KNEW WHAT I WANTED MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE IN LIFE!

I HAD TO COME BACK, IVY—I HAD TO COME BACK TO TELL YOU THAT I LOVE YOU—THAT YOU WERE RIGHT ALL THE TIME. WILL YOU GIVE THIS FOOL ANOTHER CHANCE?


OH, MY DARLING—YOU'RE BACK, THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS.
MY DARLING! YOU WERE SO RIGHT—AND I WAS SO WRONG. ALL I WANT FROM NOW ON IS YOU AND BUILDING A LIFE OF HAPPINESS FOR US TOGETHER!

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